Telepresence: Joan Jonas and the Emergence of Performance and Video Art in the 1970s

Gillian Young

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is a study of the early career of the American artist Joan Jonas that spans the years 1970-1984. At the turn of the 1970s, Jonas was one of the first artists to pick up a video camera. Exploring "live" video's unique capacity to mediate the present moment, Jonas actively integrated the technology into her live pieces, which are some of the earliest examples of what was then first called "performance art." Performance art has often been aligned with presence. In contrast, I argue that what at stake in the proliferation of live artworks by Jonas and others that merged performance and video was not a reserve of unmediated experience, but a presence that was newly technologized: *telepresence*. As Jonas investigated the novel ability to perform at a distance enabled by electronic media, her work led somewhere surprising: to telegraphy, telepathy, and the earliest telephones—"tele"-technologies that appear long obsolete (or completely fantastical). Evoking optical telegraphs, spirit mediums, speaking trumpets, and science fictional prostheses, Jonas's early oeuvre reactivates the historical contexts and unrealized potentials surrounding these dead media. In so doing, she illuminates enduring formations of the body, subjectivity, and teletechnology underlying not only the twinned emergence of performance and video art in the 1970s, but also telepresence as a seemingly very contemporary (and increasingly pervasive) category of experience.

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Introduction

"My own thinking and production has focused on issues of space—ways of dislocating it, attenuating it, flattening it, turning it inside out, always attempting to explore it without ever giving to myself or to others the permission to penetrate it."

– Joan Jonas[1]

Joan Jonas is an artist who defies any easy categorization. As she puts it, "I didn't see a major difference between a poem, a sculpture, a film, or a dance."[2] An integral figure in the heterogeneous artistic milieu of downtown Manhattan during the 1970s, Jonas was one of the first artists to make what was then initially defined as "performance art."[3] Eschewing stages sanctioned for the performing arts, Jonas's live pieces took place in gymnasiums, lofts, galleries, churches, construction zones and beaches in and around New York City as well as in the more remote environs of Nova Scotia. "Her events were

[1] Joan Jonas, with Rosalind Krauss, "Seven Years," *TDR/The Drama Review* Vol. 19 No. 1 (March 1975), 13.

[2] Joan Jonas, "Closing Statement," in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968-1982*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: The University Art Museum, University of California in association with The Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 137.

[3] Unlike Allan Kaprow's "Happenings" or Fluxus "events" of the 1960s, "performance art" was not an idiom chosen by artists to designate their experimental activity. Neither was the term entirely the invention of critics. Mel Gordon, an editor at *TDR* in the late 1970s, remembers an "emergency meeting" convened by then editor-in-chief Michael Kirby, where the editorial staff voted on the name "Performance Art" to classify this new art form in its pages. See J. Hoberman, "'Like Canyons and Rivers': Performance for Its Own Sake," *Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama—Manhattan, 1970-1980* (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press and The Whitney Museum of American Art, 2013), 17n23. In reality, the discursive formation of performance was the product of a more public and dispersed conversation that included the voices of artists, critics, and the popular press (the term appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Art and Artists*, and *The Drama Review: TDR* nearly simultaneously in 1971). The publication of a trio of books in 1979—Roselee Goldberg's *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, the edited collection *Performance by Artists*, and the exhibition catalogue *The Art of Performance*—signaled the codification of performance as an art form.

not, properly speaking, theater or dance, nor were they directly related to contemporary developments known as process or site-specific sculpture," wrote Douglas Crimp, one of Jonas's earliest and finest critics. "Indeed, it was the fact that Jonas's performances could not be assimilated to any previously known category of art that was their distinguishing characteristic. Yet at that time they were seen as a logical next step, and no one was concerned to ask what, exactly, they were."[4] Rather than attempt to retroactively fit Jonas into extant art historical categories, this dissertation returns to the formative first decade of Jonas's career in order to ask how the field might be reconfigured around her in order to account for the significance of her groundbreaking practice.

Born in New York City in 1936, Jonas attended Mount Holyoke College, the Boston Museum School, and Columbia University, where she earned an MFA in Sculpture in 1964. Jonas's studio training in sculpture and drawing was supplemented by her studies in poetry and, more extensively, art history. She was drawn to an eclectic range of art historical periods: from ancient Egyptian, Chinese, Minoan, and Greek to Romanesque, early Italian Renaissance, and Mannerist art.[5] Joan Simon has noted the impact of painting on the "performative arenas" that Jonas would create; what Crimp had identified, in 1976, as an eye for "spatial illusionism."[6] "While I was studying art history," Jonas later wrote, "I looked carefully at the space of painting, films, and sculpture—how illusions are created within a frame. From this, I learned how to deal

[4] Douglas Crimp, "De-Synchronization in Joan Jonas's Performances," in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968-1982*, ed. Crimp, 8.
[5] Joan Jonas, "Biography," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 140.
[6] Joan Simon, "Migration, Translation, Reanimation," in *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas*, Joan Jonas and Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015), 86; and Douglas Crimp, "Joan Jonas's Performance Works," *Studio International* 192, no. 982 (July/August 1976), 10.

with depth and distance."[7] When Jonas stepped out of the frame and into the "real space" of performance, as she referred to it, she would continue to plumb depth and distance, weaving spatial ambiguities into the layered texture of her live pieces.[8]

Jonas's formal art education was expanded as she traveled to Greece and other parts of Europe, Morocco, India, Japan and the Southwestern United States and, beginning in the mid-1960s, immersed herself in New York's experimental artistic community. Her journeys exposed her to a variety of performance styles, including a folk wedding ritual in Crete, the sacred Hopi Snake Dance in the American Southwest, and the highly stylized Noh theater in Japan. At home in New York, she encountered a range of contemporary practices that would form the bedrock of performance art. Following her graduate studies at Columbia, Jonas took a job as a secretary at Richard Bellamy's Green Gallery in 1965, where, she has said, she "really got educated."[9] Here she was introduced to a number of contemporary artists, including Claes Oldenburg and Robert Whitman, both of whose Happenings she attended, as well as Robert Morris, whom she saw perform with Yvonne Rainer in Morris' 1964 *Waterman Switch,* a piece that merged sculpture and dance. Later, in 1966, she saw Rainer and Whitman in *9 Evenings*, an event organized with Bell Laboratories that combined live art and technology.[10] She regularly attended screenings at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque (after 1970, Anthology Film Archives) as well as the experimental theater of The Performance Group and Living

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[7] Joan Jonas, "Transmission," in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003),115.
[8] Jonas, "Transmission," 115.
[9] Simon, "Migration, Translation, Reanimation," 85.
[10] Jonas Jonas in Joan Simon, "Scenes and Variations: An Interview with Joan Jonas," *Art in America* 83, no.7 (July 1995), 75; and Joan Jonas, interview by Grace Glueck, 2009, transcript, Elizabeth Murray Women in the Visual Arts Oral History Project, Columbia University, New York, NY, 288-289.

Theater. In 1970, she would become smitten with the performances of Jack Smith, frequenting his loft (aka The Plaster Foundation) for intimate and enigmatic shows that would begin at midnight and stretch until dawn.

After befriending Rainer and Simone Forti, Jonas began to take workshops with choreographers who belonged to the Judson Dance Theater. Between 1967 and 1969, she studied with Rainer, Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, and Deborah Hay (in 1969, she performed in Hay's "911: A Dance Concert by Deborah Hay" at the Whitney Museum).[11] Jonas has said that she was initially inspired to work with Judson choreographers after seeing a dance by Lucinda Childs in 1965.[12] Childs' dance, *Geranium,* consisted of movements choreographed to an edited tape of a live broadcast of a football game, such as measuring the audience excitement audible on the tape with a pole and slowly falling in sync with the commentator's description of a player's tumble.[13] Like other Judson

[11] Simon, "Migration, Translation, Reanimation," 87-88. See also Ingrid Schaffner, "Conversation with Joan Jonas," *Joan Jonas: They Come to Us Without a Word*, ed. Jane Farver (Cambridge, New York, and Ostfildern: MIT List Visual Arts Center, Gregory R. Miller & Co., Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2015), 118. Though she never formally studied with her, Jonas was also inspired by the choreography of Simone Forti, who later performed in a number of Jonas's pieces. See Simon, "Scenes and Variations: An Interview with Joan Jonas," 75.

[12] See Douglas Crimp, "Joan Jonas's Performance Works," 10. As Crimp wrote, "Jonas started thinking about performance in the mid-sixties after seeing a dance by Lucinda Childs at the Judson Church." As Jonas later told Ingrid Schaffner, "I saw Lucinda Childs perform a piece that was, for me, very strange. And immediately I thought, 'Oh my god, this is very attractive. I have to do this.' That's when I really decided to go into performance, but it took me several years" (118). *Geranium* is specified by Andrée Hayum in her report on Jonas's contribution to a CAA panel with Vito Acconci and Yvonne Rainer organized by Allan Kaprow in 1975. See Hayum, "Reports on the 63rd Annual College Art Association Meeting: Notes on Performance and the Arts," *Art Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Summer 1975), 337. (*Geranium* was performed at Arthur Leslie Studio in 1965, not the Judson Church).

[13] Lucinda Childs in "Lucinda Childs," transcript of interview with Childs edited by Anne Livet, in *Contemporary Dance: An Anthology of Lectures, Interviews and Essays with Many of the Most Important Contemporary American Choreographers, Scholars and Critics,* ed. Livet (New York: Abbeville Press, 1978), 61. See also Sally Banes,

dances such as Rainer's *The Mind is a Muscle*, which Jonas saw in 1966, *Geranium* opened dance to vernacular styles—in this case, of athletic performance. Akin to *Waterman Switch*, which included a tape of Morris speaking, Childs also amplified the live presentation of her own body through multiple media as she tethered movement to the taped football broadcast.[14] As Carrie Lambert-Beatty has argued, what set Judson apart from traditional dance, in addition to its embrace of the facticity of the physical body and everyday movement, was the way that it actively anticipated and engaged new conditions of media spectatorship and economies of attention, particularly as informed by the ascendency of television in the 1960s. By considering the gap between "the body being, and being watched," Lambert-Beatty writes, Judson dancers "were negotiating a wider cultural problem. What was happening to the category of lived experience itself, as people more and more frequently experienced in the here and now events distant from them spatially, temporally, or both?"[15]

If Jonas, who never formally trained as a dancer, felt welcomed into Judson's pedestrian fold, she would in turn engage the question of media spectatorship, putting pressure on the live category of dance. In her first piece for a workshop with Brown, Jonas divided the space in half: projecting a film of dyed strings hanging in the sun on one side of the room and rehanging the actual strings on the other.[16] Jonas would later

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Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 135.

[14] As Samuel Weber has written, the "live" sporting event broadcast to anywhere is the "*media event* par excellence." Samuel Weber, "Television: Set and Screen," in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Power Publications: Sydney, 1996), 127. Emphasis Weber's.

[15] Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 6, 41.

[16] On one side of the room, a film was projected. Shot by Peter Campus, the film showed close-ups of strings that Jonas had dyed hanging on a rack in the sunlight. On the other

return to this technique of offering her audiences a dual perspective composed of live and mediated views of the same action or object. In her next workshop piece, Jonas took up what would become one of her signature props, the mirror: a device that similarly multiplied perspective, fragmenting any unified perception of space while adding a pronounced psychological layer. For the next two years she choreographed dances inspired by Busby Berkeley with mirrors adorning, carried by, and sandwiched between performers. Mirrors mediated encounters between performers and spectators, as audience members' gazes and images were startlingly returned to them, as well as between the performers themselves as they negotiated the large panes of glass. As Jonas has said, "I chose as my first technological tool the mirror."[17] In 1970, Jonas acquired another tool—a video camera—that would expand her art historical studies of "depth and distance" and choreographic explorations of physical presence into investigations of newly technologized experiences of distance and presence. It was at this point that her live pieces, which were previously categorized as dances, became *performances*.

Key to the pioneering nature of Jonas's work at the turn of the 1970s—the way that it simply seemed to take, as Crimp noted, a "logical next step"—was her early adoption of newly available video technology. It was at this moment that a portable video system with instant playback capabilities—the Sony "portapak"—became available to consumers, artists among them.[18] Rather than using video to document her performances,

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side of the room, Jonas performed Deborah and Keith Hollingworth (a couple who would form, with Jonas and several other dancers their own Choreoconcerts Experimental Workshops that year). While the film played, the three hung the same strings seen in the film over another row of strings that Jonas had pinned diagonally across the room. Simon, "Migration, Translation, Reanimation," 87-88.

[17] Jonas, "Transmission," 117.

[18] The first portapak system, the Sony DV-2400 Video Rover, was released in 1967. This system consisted of two pieces: a video camera and a 1/2-inch video recorder. A separate

by actively integrating "live" video into her events, Jonas investigated precisely what appeared novel about this technology: its ability to record and display images in real time. "Video allowed for the immediacy and the continuity of television's live broadcast," Jonas later wrote; it "offered a continuous present."[19] Throughout the 1970s, Jonas availed herself of a range of vast and intimate spaces in which to explore the impact of televisual technology on earlier concerns of depth and distance and physical presence—indeed new possibilities of presence *at* a distance. In her artworks of this period, the line between performance and video was difficult, if not impossible, to discern: "performance and tape—the two fed into each other," Jonas remarked in 1979.[20] Hers was an essentially hybrid and presciently apt approach to the increasingly mediated quality of the "continuous present."

A Genealogy of Video and Performance Art

When her now iconic videotape *Vertical Roll* (1972) was included in a video art festival in 1975, Jonas expressed dismay in her journal. "In this video show they have me

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piece of equipment, a Sony CV series VTR, was necessary to play back the video. In 1969, Sony released the Video Rover II, which paired the AV-3400 portable record/playback videorecorder with the AV-3400 camera in a more compact unit, merging the playback and recording functions in one piece of the two-piece set. As the AV-3400 owner's manual reads, "The system will record 'live' action, and the recorded picture can be immediately played back and viewed on the camera viewfinder screen." "AV 3400 Owner's Manual, 1969," archived on the Experimental Television Center website under "Sony AV-3400 Porta Pak," http://www.experimentaltvcenter.org/sony-av-3400-porta-pak.

[19] Jonas, "Transmission," 122.

[20] Joan Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979." *View* Vol. II No. I (April 1979), 22.

as a 'video artist,'" Jonas wrote, lamenting: "The pain of lost forgotten performance—."[21] The "forgotten performance" is *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy,* the live event (and video, of the same title) that gave rise to *Vertical Roll* (which then fed back into a performance, *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*) (all 1972). Though *Vertical Roll* exists as a standalone video, as such it has also been extracted from a larger body of work in which video and performance are not so easy to separate. The closed circuit video equipment Jonas used to make *Vertical Roll*, for instance, formed part of the mise-en-scène for the events surrounding it. Technology likewise infuses her movements in the video, as Jonas hops over a scrolling glitch caused by desynchronized signals, or allows its automatic rhythm to animate her hips. Watching *Vertical Roll,* which has become known as a founding example of video art, it is impossible to tell where the video ends and performance begins, or vice versa: as Jonas intimates, they are painful to separate.

Jonas was integral to the historical formation of the categories of performance art and video art over the course of the decade. As the inextricable layers of performance and video permeating *Vertical Roll* indicate, this formation was co-constitutive. Histories of performance art and video art have, however, most often been premised on origins that are isolated from one another, giving rise to narratives that are trans-historical, on the one hand, or technologically determined, on the other. When performance surfaced as an object of study in the mid-1970s, scholars began to treat it as an art form and mode of communication rooted in primordial ritual, an approach that has informed art historical chronicles of performance art.[22] That the early history of video art is contested is widely

[21] Joan Jonas Archive. Notebook dated 1975.
[22] Richard Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory 1970-1976* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977), particularly "From Ritual to Theatre and Back: the Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad" (1974-1976) and Ernest Theodore

recognized, but this discussion has been tethered to the question of who used the first available video equipment in 1965—namely, Nam June Paik or Andy Warhol—binding video art to the life of a technical format.[23] Martha Rosler has critiqued what she calls "the myth of [Nam June] Paik" for occluding considerations of video art as a more diffuse practice with a longer history in avant-garde practice that exceeds the technical availability of video. [24] Drawing on Michel Foucault's genealogical method developed during the 1970s, I approach the problem as one of a fundamentally heterogeneous

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Kirby, *Ur-Drama: The Origins of Theatre* (New York: NYU Press, 1975). See also Roselee Goldberg, who in her 1979 book *Performance Art: Live Art 1909 to the Present* dated the origin to performance art to the first Futurist Evening in 1909, wrote that, before the Futurists, "artists have always turned to live performance": "Whether tribal ritual or medieval Passion Plays, Leonardo Da Vinci's experiments before invited audiences or his river pageants, Bernini's staged spectacles, such as *The Inundation of the Tiber*, or the 'soirées' or the so-called primitive painter Henri Rousseau in his Montmartre studio, such events have always played an important part in shaping the history of art" (6). Goldberg, *Performance Art: Live Art 1909* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979). Locating the origins of performance art beyond its discursive (and as I argue, technological) emergence in the 1970s has also provided a powerful and much needed corrective to the art historical canon that has privileged white artists through exclusionary historical narratives of avant-garde performance. In 1994, Coco Fusco argued that performance art began with the first live exhibition of non-Western people. More recently, Uri McMillan has provocatively situated the origins of performance art in American slavery. See Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," *TDR/The Drama Review* Vol. 38 No. 1 (Spring 1994): 143-167 and Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: NYU Press, 2015).

[23] See Marita Sturken, "Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form, Great Expectations and the Making of a History," in *Illuminating Video: As Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York and San Francisco: Aperture in association with the Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990), 101-124, for a comprehensive account of the contested origins of video art. For a discussion of Paik versus Warhol as the first artist to make video art, see William Kaizen, "Live on Tape: Video, Liveness, and the Immediate," in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate Publishing in association with Afterall, 2008), 258-259.

[24] As Rosler has argued, the formation of video art was a discursive rather than a primarily technological phenomenon, marked by debates about how this new technology would redefine the role of the artist vis-à-vis the avant-garde tradition, on the one hand, and the popular media theory of Marshall McLuhan, on the other. Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment" (1986) in *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings 1975-2001* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

emergence that has been occluded by isolated origin stories. "The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations," Foucault wrote: "on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself."[25]

The erecting of separate foundations has created a rift in art historical scholarship on performance and video art. While the literature surrounding performance art has centered on the embodied and intersubjective encounter between artist and spectator (or participant), where video is one of many things that might mediate this encounter, the study of video art has focused on the inherent qualities of the video medium and modes of media activism that eclipse other kinds of performance.[26] This bifurcated approach has resulted in a disciplinary blind spot that has obscured Jonas's historical significance.[27] My dissertation holds that performance art and video art were born in tension with one

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[25] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 147.

[26] For literature on performance art see Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Kathy O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art, and the 1970s* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Cherise Smith, *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deveare Smith* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). For scholarship on video art see David Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007); Christine Mehring, "TV Art's Abstract Starts: Europe circa 1944–1969," *October* 124 (Summer 2008): 29–64; Yvonne Spielmann, *Video: The Reflexive Medium* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008). In "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976), Krauss posits a link between the body and subjectivity of the artist and the video apparatus but doesn't discuss it in terms of performance (her article is part and parcel of the articulation of video and performance I'm historicizing). Ina Blom's *Autobiography of Video* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016) explores the link between technology and subjectivity by defining video as a memory technology endowed with a kind of consciousness, but she does not discuss performance.

[27] Jonas's work has filtered into both strains in a piecemeal fashion. It is symptomatic of a wider disciplinary divide, then, that two of the most influential texts on video art by David Joselit and Rosalind Krauss treat Joan Jonas's videos as discrete entities, while Wagner herself only discusses Jonas's performances.

another at a specific moment—one that coincides with the foundational decade of Jonas's influential career. In addition to accounting for Jonas's resolutely hybrid practice, the genealogy of video and performance undertaken here opens onto a wider field of artistic experimentation, freshly constellating figures such as Nancy Holt, Gordon Matta-Clark, Carolee Schneemann, Richard Serra, Jack Smith, and members of Judson Dance Theater and The Wooster Group.

As Jonas has remarked, unlike traditional mediums such as painting and sculpture, the nascent forms of performance and video as they were still in formation over the course of the 1970s were appealing because they were not dominated by male artists.[28] A genealogy that reveals the interrelation of performance and video art returns to the feminist potential of this tremendously influential moment in the history of art. In so doing, my dissertation fundamentally challenges the patrilineal narratives that have informed art historical approaches to performance art: that it began with the first Futurist evening; that it is rooted in the action painting of Jackson Pollock, which in turn inspired Allan Kaprow's Happenings as "radical prototypes" of performance; or that it developed directly from the minimalist sculptors Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Robert Morris's concerns with phenomenology and publicity.[29] As it corrects the art historical record of

[28] "Joan Jonas on Feminism," video produced by The Museum of Modern Art, 2009. http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/89/508. See also Joan Jonas interviewed by R.H. Quaytman in "Joan Jonas," *Interview Magazine* (December 10, 2014). https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/joan-jonas

[29] Goldberg, *Performance Art: Live Art 1909 to the Present*; Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life,* rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013); Frazer Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 28-51. Jones's otherwise feminist account of performance is nevertheless tied to the "Pollockian performative" as a precursor to body

performance, following Jonas's lead as both an early video expert and, as I argue, a media archaeologist, my dissertation also makes a feminist intervention into the study of media by revealing questions of embodiment, subjectivity, and gender and sexual difference familiar to performance at the heart of what may appear to be simply technological.

"Presence," or Mediation Beyond Documentation

Performance and video might seem to be closely related because video documents performance. Anyone who has watched performances from the early 1970s is familiar with the portapak patina: fuzzy grey images, trails of movement, low fidelity sound. Many artists did use video to document their performances, and its role as a recording device certainly had an impact on the live art of the period. The history of dance, for instance, was decisively shaped by video technology when, in 1978, choreography became legally protected for the first time largely because videotaping could reproduce dance more effectively than was formerly possible.[30] However, thinking about the relationship between performance and video in terms of documentation erects a binary framework that constrains how we approach the question of presence so provocatively raised by the work of this period. For instance, what do we make of the fact that some of

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art. See Jones, "The 'Pollockian Performative' and the Revision of the Modernist Subject," in *Body Art*, 53-102. While Ward includes a chapter on Marina Abramović and on Tehching Hsieh, which diversify his account of performance in the 1970s, the primary protagonists driving his argument that performance art originated from the contestation of minimalism's neutral approach to the question of the public are Vito Acconci and Chris Burden. See Ward, "Performance after Minimalism," in *No Innocent Bystanders,* 28-51.

[30] Arthur Lublow, "Can Modern Dance Be Preserved?" *The New York Times Magazine* (November 8, 2009), MM38.

the first video documentaries of the 1970s were presented not as records but *as* live events? In such "video theaters," as Deirdre Boyle has called them, a range of "channels" including prerecorded videotape and live video streams were mixed in real time, often incorporating audience feedback.[31] The "Now" project, a media event sponsored by CBS in 1969, set a precedent for these live video documentaries. "Nearly everyone with a portapak in New York worked on the show," Boyle reported, which was "performed as a live, multichannel spectacle, mixing live music performance with colorized tape and film documentary segments."[32] In the years that followed, the binary of the media document and the live performance—or, in Peggy Phelan's terms, the marked and the unmarked—was precisely what was exploded by performance art as it emerged with video at the turn of the 1970s.[33] Though video could be used to record, as artists originally used it, it was

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[31] Deidre Boyle, "A Brief History of American Documentary Video," in *Illuminating Video: As Essential Guide to Video Art*, 51-70. John Reilly and Stefan Moore designed *The Irish Tapes*, their documentary of conflict in Belfast in 1970 as an "event" by editing over one hundred hours of footage into three channels played live on ten monitors alongside clips from the New York City St. Patrick's Parade in 1973, for instance; while in 1972 Skip Sweeney and Arthur Ginsberg presented *The Continuing Story of Carel and Ferd*, a proto-reality show documenting the marriage of a porn star and a queer drug addict by live mixing six inputs (including a closed-circuit feed of the audience) on twelve monitors (54). Similarly, the original iteration of *Wipe Cycle* by Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider took place before a live audience in 1970. As David Ross has described, the "piece consisted of a bank of nine monitors programmed into four distinct cycles including two prerecorded tape inputs, a live camera on an eight- and sixteen-second delay loop, a mix of off-the-air programs, and a unifying gray wipe that swept the field counterclockwise every few seconds." As Ross wrote, this video performance was intended to "integrate the audience into the information" through the "manipulation of the audience's sense of time and space, giving the work the combined impact of live performance and a cybernetic sculpture." David Ross, "A Provisional Overview of Artists' Television in the U.S." in *New Artists Video*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1978), 144.

[32] Boyle, "A Brief History," 53.

[33] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). Drawing on the deconstructive philosophy of Jacques Derrida, Phelan characterized the dualism that underpins performance/documentation as conforming to the tradition of Western metaphysics that creates a system of evaluation based on two

not primarily a technology of reproduction. In turn, mediation was no longer sequestered on the side of documentation; it inhered in the particular presence named "performance."

As performance and video surfaced together in the early part of the 1970s as definable art forms, they were often inseparable—both of them shared a purchase on the "live"—or the "Now," as CBS billed it in 1969.[34] When the "live" (i.e. instant playback) capabilities of video became more seamless with the introduction of the Sony Video Rover II that year, artists increasingly staged the video apparatus and its real time capabilities, turning the camera on themselves and their spectators. In January of 1974, these activities were grouped in an exhibition titled "Video Performance" at 112 Greene Street, which included pieces by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Ulrike Rosenbach, Richard Serra, Chris Burden, Willoughby Sharp, Keith Sonnier, William Wegman and others.[35] In these hybrid pieces, the presence of performers and spectators was questioned by the

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oppositional terms, where "[o]ne term of the binary marked with value, the other unmarked" (5). In Phelan's analysis, the documentation of performance is marked—valued, marketable—while performance itself is unmarked, always disappearing. "For only rarely in this culture is the 'now' to which performance addresses its deepest questions valued. (This is why the now is supplemented and buttressed by the documenting camera, the video archive)" (146).

[34] See Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999). Examining the way in which live and mediatized events were increasingly modeled on one another in a culture saturated by television (as indicated by the "Now" event organized by CBS), Auslander argued "in favor of a view that emphasizes the mutual dependence of the live and the mediatized and that challenges the traditional assumption that the live precedes the mediatized" (11). For Auslander, the very category of "liveness" is an effect of the mediatization of performance. "Live performance now often incorporate mediatization such that the live event itself is a product of media technologies. This has been the case to some degree for a long time, of course: as soon as electronic amplification is used, one might say that an event is mediatized (24). This was crystalized by an anecdote involving the Doors, who, during a live performance in 1967, turned their back to the audience to watch themselves on a television placed on one of their amps. "By staging their relationship to television this way in 1967, the Doors revealed their prescience concerning what would be happening in the relationship between live and mediatized performance" (10).

[35] See "Video Performance" issue of *Avalanche Newspaper* (May/June 1974).

integration of video and performance. In *Isolation is Transparent*, for instance, the audience could watch Rosenbach weave a rope spider's web around herself either through a semi-transparent vinyl wall or via a video hookup stationed on the other side of this scrim. "The final effect was that the video images of me seemed to be clearer and more defined than the visual contact the audience had with my actual physical presence while performing."[36] The audience of Serra's *Prisoner's Dilemma* was similarly walled off, accessing the piece via video monitors even as they were crammed into the gallery where part of the "video performance" took place. The piece itself mixed live and prerecorded tape in a televisual experiment involving actors (Richard Schechner, Spalding Gray) and non-actors (Leo Castelli) based on game theory, resonating with Richard Nixon's recently publicized machinations.[37]

Willoughby Sharp later published an essay on "Videoperformance" in Beryl Korot and Ira Schneider's 1976 *Video Art: An Anthology*. Sharp's essay cited Jonas and Bruce Nauman in addition to Acconci, Burden, Sonnier, and Wegman. Here Sharp identified Nauman as one of the first artists to engage video and performance simultaneously, as he performed for the video camera in his studio in a piece like *Walking in Contrapposto* (1969), in which he strode lopsidedly inside a corridor, and later invited his "audiences" to navigate similar corridors monitored by live video. In these participatory works one's physical presence was disturbed by the way one was both distanced from oneself by and dependent on one's appearance onscreen.[38] Recent

[36] Ulrike Rosenbach in "Ulrike Rosenbach…Isolation is Transparent," ed. Liza Béar, *Avalanche Newspaper*, 10.
[37] "Richard Serra and Robert Bell…Prisoner's Dilemma," ed. Liza Béar, *Avalanche Newspaper*, 26-29.
[38] As Nauman indicated, "The point of the piece is to make a visual corridor in which you must walk in order to keep yourself visible on the monitor screen. At the same time, one

literature on some of the artists gathered by "Videoperformance" has begun to mend the divide between performance and video art scholarship. As Janet Kraynak has elaborated in her book on Nauman, performance was (and continues to be) bound up with the acceleration of technological society and its impact on modes of visuality, interaction, behavior, and control.[39] In his writing on Burden, Frazer Ward has argued that the questions of publicity raised by the artist in his notorious performances such as *Shoot* (1971) must be understood in terms of a public increasingly mediated by television.[40]

As Anne Wagner has argued, "when performance actively joined forces with reproductive technologies around 1970," it was not a truce based on the anxiety of documenting live performance, but of staking presence in an increasingly mediatized culture, where art audiences might rather be watching TV. [41] "Video and performance artists," Wagner wrote, "have courted effects of presence, in the endless present—the absolute publicity—that their medium so ably supplies. They do their utmost to invoke settings and artifacts and experiences that connote the problematic real of technologically mediated experience."[42] The "rhetoric of presence" advanced by artists working in both video and performance was not a paean to lost immediacy. Rather, it represented the attempt to find a convincing vocabulary for negotiating the "the problematic real of technologically mediated experience." For Wagner, this problematic is overarched by the

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must keep oneself visible on the monitor in order to stay in the corridor." Quoted in Willoughby Sharp, "Video Performance," in *Video Art: An Anthology,* ed. Beryl Korot and Ira Schneider (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976-77), 254.

[39] Janet Kraynak, *Nauman Reiterated* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[40] Frazer Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders* and "Gray Zone: Watching Shoot," *October* 95 (Winter 2001), 114-130.

[41] Anne Wagner, "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence," *October* 91 (Winter 2000), 74.

[42] Wagner, "Rhetoric of Presence," 75-76.

technology of television, which, understandably, is also the privileged object of much video art criticism. Given that TV was and is only very rarely "live," my dissertation privileges a different and more expansive term to address the newly technologized presence identified by Wagner: *telepresence*.

The term "telepresence" first appeared in an article published by the cognitive and computer scientist Marvin Minsky in 1980. Minsky coined telepresence to describe technologies of remote manipulation. These included sophisticated robotic arms installed in one place that, via sensory feedback, would enable users situated in another to "achieve that sense of really 'being there.'"[43] While my fourth chapter attends to the particular historical and, as it turns out, science fictional circumstances surrounding Minsky's coinage, my dissertation engages a wider view of telepresence. The "telematic" artist Roy Ascott has defined telepresence as "technologies of presence" that produce the state of being "both here and there."[44] These technologies include "computer networks, interactive video, slow-scan television, fax, digital image transfer, videotex, teleconference, videophone or online communications by means of telephone, cable or satellite link"[45]—in short, any number of electronic media that seem to instantaneously bridge here and there to achieve presence at a distance. The twinned emergence of video and performance art in the 1970s were bound together by this newly technologized presence, providing a watershed assemblage and heuristic opportunity for what appeared to be a new category of experience. However, though it was only named at the turn of the

[43] Marvin Minsky, "Telepresence," *Omni* (June 1980), 48.
[44] Roy Ascott, *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Edward Shanken (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 264, and Ascott, "Connectivity: Art and Interactive Telecommunications," Leonardo Vol. 24 No.2 (April 1991), 116.
[45] Ascott, *Telematic Embrace*, 116.

1980s, telepresence is a much older phenomenon rooted in diverse origins of modern telecommunications in the nineteenth century. The full significance of this phenomenon has been partially buried with outmoded teletechnologies that did not make Ascott's litany, lodged in the "unstable assemblage of faults, fissures, and heterogeneous layers" that spread out "within or from underneath" the hybrid foundations of performance and video art.[46]

Origins of Telepresence

Tele signifies that which occurs at a distance. Derived from the ancient Greek expression for "afar" or "far off," the prefix "tele-" forms "scientific and technical terms chiefly denoting or relating to action, observation, or communication at, over, or across a distance."[47] The first such usage was telescope: an optical instrument to view distant objects described by Federico Cesi in a letter to Galileo in 1611.[48] If the telescope enabled observation at a distance, the ability to communicate across a distance was inaugurated by the *télégraphe,* a semaphore signaling system invented in France in 1792.[49] The electrical telegraph, which allowed coded messages to be transmitted across vast distances nearly instantaneously, would replace these optical telegraph systems in the 1830s. In its eventual form, Morse code was transmitted through tones heard the moment they were transmitted. As Jonathan Sterne has written, by providing the "audible

[46] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 146.
[47] "Tele-, comb. form," *Oxford English Dictionary*.
[48] "Telescope," *Oxford English Dictionary*.
[49] "Telegraph," *Oxford English Dictionary*. Chappe called his invention, which consisted of a network of semaphore towers in France, the *tachygraphe*. In 1793, this semaphore system would be referred to for the first time as the telegraph.

trace of contemporaneous distant events," this form of telegraphy "was perhaps the first media site where proximal sounds directly corresponded with distant events."[50] With the "audible trace of contemporaneous distant events," the traditional limits of the body and physical geographic position began to fall away. The ability to be present at a distance was born.

Following the emergence of the telegraph, the nineteenth century witnessed the widespread transformation of distance into *tele*. This transformation was bound up with what John Durham Peters has called "the nineteenth-century conquest of distance."[51] Part of this conquest was achieved through steam-powered transportation that fundamentally changed experiences of distance.[52] Beginning with the telegraph, the nineteenth century also saw the revolutionary uncoupling of communication from transportation (messages no longer needed to be physically carried by horse or pigeon, etc.) that would define modern telecommunications.[53] "*Tele*-," Peters writes, "suggests a new scale of distances" created by a range of "space-binding media."[54] Fueled by electricity (or, in the case of telepathy, and even early telephony, the female nervous system), such media "knit distinct points in space together over great distances."[55] As Peters argues, electronic media renewed older ideals of communication by forming a "new kind of quasi-physical

[50] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 151.
[51] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 143.
[52] Stephen Kern, "Distance," in *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1983), 211-240. For the impact of the railroad in particular, see Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).
[53] James W. Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph," in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 201-230.
[54] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 138
[55] Peters, *Speaking into the Air,* 138.

connection across the boundaries of time and space. Thanks to electricity, communication could now take place regardless of impediments such as distance or embodiment."[56] The apparent ability for technologies to produce presence at a distance by overcoming the obstacles of space and the body contributed to what "tele" now signifies. As Samuel Weber has written, in this prefix "the notion of 'distance' is preserved only as an *obstacle* to be *surmounted*, either through some intangible sixth-sense" or "electronic apparatus," Weber observes, both of which are "linked to the ability to transcend the spatial limitations associated with the body."[57] What a closer look at the proliferation of teletechnologies of the nineteenth century reveals, however, is the way that distance and the body were never simply transcended, but actively technologized in such a way that contributed to—but also stood in excess of—the formation of contemporary experiences of telepresence.

What is particularly striking about Jonas's work during the 1970s is how her initial experiments with cutting-edge video technology such as the portapak and later more sophisticated editing and special effects tools continually appear to reference outmoded media. This phenomenon, which has been overlooked in the scholarship on Jonas, forms the kernel of my dissertation. I take Jonas to be both an artist and a media archaeologist: an investigator of so-called "dead media." My project is therefore informed by the field of media archeology, which, broadly defined, seeks to understand emerging media through close examination of past modes of storage and transmission that preceded them. Media archaeology's approach to neglected techniques and devices overshadowed by more obvious technological developments is often motivated by a

[56] Peters, *Speaking into the Air,* 5.
[57] Weber, "Television: Set and Screen," 114.

critical scrutiny of dominant progressivist histories of communication and commercial media. As Siegfried Zielinski has written, "the history of the media is not the product of a predictable and necessary advance from primitive to complex apparatus."[58] A media archeology of telepresence unearths other teletechnologies—some outmoded, some still speculative—that were nevertheless key to its ascendency as one of the primary modes through which we interact. Yet an examination of these bygone technologies of presence also complicates the dominance of telepresence in everyday life, revealing forgotten investments, stakes, and alternatives.

Each of the four chapters of my dissertation addresses a different historical formation of presence at a distance as it was engaged by Jonas over the course of the 1970s: telegraphy, telepathy, telephony, and finally telepresence. The first chapter examines a series of outdoor performances Jonas made between 1970 and 1972, where spectators and performers were placed at extreme distances from one another across natural and urban landscapes, suggesting a rudimentary form of television. I argue that the "signals" Jonas sent through these deep landscapes evoked optical telegraphs that preceded electric telegraphy (flag semaphores, heliographs), to stake geographic spaces ostensibly overcome by electronic teletechnologies through embodied acts of communication. The second chapter revolves around *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* (1972), Jonas's first performance to actively integrate video technology. This was the first in a series of performances and videos featuring Jonas's alter ego "Organic Honey," which has often been read as a critique of female identity. Taking up Jonas's overlooked reference to telepathy, I examine the intimate relationship of occult channeling to other

[58] Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward and Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means,* trans. Gloria Custance (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 7.

telemedia and psychoanalytic formations of gender and sexual identity, revealing erotic and queer foundations of telepresence. The third chapter explores the role of sound in Jonas's performances and videos of the mid-1970s. I consider Jonas's and others' engagements with long-distance sound over and against McLuhan's notion of "auditory space" as a unified field of simultaneous connection generated by electronic media. I then focus on the resonance between Jonas's use of large cones as sonic props in her work during this period and early telephones and megaphones: media that extend bodily and communicational difference in public space, countering McLuhan's definition of media as "extensions of man" that would constitute a unified globe. The fourth chapter takes up *Double Lunar Dogs* (1980-1984), a performance and video based on a science fiction story by Robert Heinlein: the same writer who inspired Minsky's notion of "telepresence." Accounting for Jonas's seemingly traditional turn to acting techniques at the moment that performance art was being codified in its own right, I investigate theater as an age-old laboratory of telepresence, one that has explored distributions of presence disturbing to scientific development but at home in science fiction.

The media archaeology of telepresence guided by Jonas reveals teletechnologies that are inseparable from modes of performance employed by human signalers, channelers, demonstrators, and actors. In this sense the media archaeology of telepresence extends and elaborates the genealogy of video and performance art as they surfaced together at the turn of the 1970s. Stemming from the historical intersection of video and performance, I suggest that this is where Jonas's deeper investigations of forgotten histories of telepresence are located: not simply in technologies, but techniques of the body and reformulations of subjectivity essential to the technologization of

presence.[59] As Foucault wrote, genealogy is "situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history."[60] By reactivating the politics and potentialities of older forms of telepresence, Jonas's work illuminates longstanding imbrications of the body, subjectivity, and teletechnological media underlying not only the dual emergence of performance and video art in the 1970s, but also what has become one of the most common realms of contemporary experience, arguably the very substance of "presence": existence at a distance.

The Artist is Telepresent

In 2010, the "rhetoric of presence" returned with a vengeance. The Yugoslavian performance artist Marina Abramović's exhibition *The Artist is Present* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (March 14 – May 31, 2010) represented a flashpoint for debates about the relationship between performance and media. The exhibition was twofold. It was a retrospective of Abramović's performances dating from the 1970s, all of which were re-presented though "reperformance," in which performers learned the performances and recreated them live. *The Artist is Present* was also the title of a new piece designed for the exhibition, which offered visitors the chance to sit across from and

[59] Integral to my media archaeological approach and commitment to performance, it is in this sense that my dissertation diverges from Kris Paulsen's rich new book, *Here/There: Telepresence, Touch, and Art at the Interface* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017). Paulsen's study begins with a focus on video art in the 1970s and ends with one of the ascendant modes of telepresence in the contemporary moment: drones. Paulsen's focus is on artists' responses to the mediation of touch through interfaces, which, as her attention to video attests, are most commonly screens. What an archaeological approach to telepresence rooted in performance finds is not primarily how touch is mediated, but how the body and subjectivity were reformulated to enable presence at a distance.
[60] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 148.

stare into the eyes of Abramović herself, who sat unmoving in the atrium during museum hours. As their joint title promised (or protested too much), both the retrospective exhibition and the contemporary piece pointedly raised the question of the status of presence in performance.

Evoking the entangled roots of performance and video art in the 1970s, even the seemingly singular moment of co-presence between artist and viewer offered by *The Artist is Present* was mediated by video. First, video served as documentation, as there was footage of the original pieces performed by Abramović and Ulay alongside others "reperforming" these earlier works. Additionally, video shaped the "Present" announced by the title of the exhibition, as the intimate and ephemeral encounters between Abramovic and viewers were live streamed on the Internet. (I watched the performance while working inside MoMA's warehouse in Queens, for instance). As Amelia Jones wrote in a critique of the exhibition, the appearance of the performance on the web "reveals the dependence of any concept of presence on (in this case web) documentation."[61] Yet this form of instantaneous and distributed watching was not exactly, or not primarily, a case of documentation; it was rather the distribution of Abramović's presence to any place with an Internet connection. Complicating rather than opposing the declaration *The Artist is Present*, the artist was always also *telepresent*.

"In a generative view of performance, the relation of performer and viewer is something to be continually manipulated an multiplied," Lambert-Beatty wrote in her review of *The Artist is Present*, "not restricted to the model of co-presence."[62] Yet this is what Abramović "does with a vengeance," Lambert-Beatty observes, particularly in the

[61] Amelia Jones, "'The Artist is Present': Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence," *TDR: The Drama Review* Vol. 55 No. 1 (Spring 2011), 18.
[62] Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Against Performance Art," *Artforum* (May 2010), 212.

commissioned performance. Echoing the heterogeneous nature of Jonas's performances, Lambert-Beatty asks how performance "disallows the very consolidation of something like an 'art form'" that could be defined and protected by art institutions like MoMA. "Rather than celebrating 'liveness' (or anything else) as performance art's signal contribution," an alternative model of performance "is interested in multiple and changing temporalities. Physicality and embodiment remain important in this way of thinking about performance, but because of, and in their points of contact with, the ever-evolving forms of less material media."[63] What Lambert-Beatty describes as "performance perceived otherwise" is precisely what emerged in the 1970s.

Jones, meanwhile, critiqued the exhibition for seeming to uphold a metaphysical notion of presence that had long since been dismantled by poststructuralist philosophers, beginning with Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s. As Jones writes, the very title *The Artist is Present* seems to advocate the way that the "live act" of performance is "often privileged as delivering an authentic and 'present' body."[64] For Jones, what the exhibition revealed was not the facticity of the present moment but the very impossibility of presence. "'Presence' as commonly understood is a state that entails the unmediated co-extensivity in time and place of what I perceive and myself; it promises a transparency to an observer of what 'is' at the very moment at which it takes place. But the event, the performance, by combining materiality and durationality (its enacting of the body as always already escaping into the past) points to the fact there is no 'presence' as such."[65] Jones's analysis is based on Derrida's critique of Husserl's phenomenology of presence. She points to Derrida's 1967 book *Speech and Phenomena*, published in English in 1973,

[63] Lambert-Beatty, "Against Performance Art," 211.
[64] Jones, "'The Artist is Present,'" 17.
[65] Jones, "'The Artist is Present,'" 18.

in which he proceeds to "raise the spectre of nonpresence at the core of every 'present' moment."[66] As Derrida theorized, "the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is *continuously compounded* with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation."[67] Our unique experience of the present moment is always conditioned by recent memory (that which is no longer present) and expectation of what will happen next (that which is not yet present). Presence is therefore always divided from itself. Jonas said something similar about the kind of "present" offered by video. As "simultaneously a recording medium" and form of "live broadcast," Jonas wrote, video "offered a continuous present—showing real-time actions, and incorporated a potential future, re-viewing and reusing actions thus recorded."[68] Like Derrida's notion of presence that is always divided from within, the "continuous present" mediated by video is always riven by "actions thus recorded" and "potential future"—which might include a simultaneous distancing through "live broadcast."

In 1993, Derrida appeared on television. In an interview with Bernard Stiegler that was broadcast on French TV, Derrida cannot help himself from discussing the nature of presence at the moment that he is filmed by the television cameras. "We see, here, how our present divides itself: the living present is itself divided," Derrida says, referencing his notion of *differance*, but here with a teletechnological underpinning: "we know now, under the lights, in front of the camera, listening to the echo of our own voices, that this *live* moment will be able to be—that it is already—captured by machines that will

[66] Jones, "'The Artist is Present,'" 19n4.
[67] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 64.
[68] Jonas, "Transmission," 122.

transport and perhaps show it God knows when and God knows where…"[69] Pronouncing "live" in English, Derrida remarks that the "greatest intensity of 'live' life is captured from as close as possible in order to be borne as far away as possible. If there is a specificity, it stems from the measure of this distance, it stems from this polarity which holds together the closest and the farthest away."[70] Derrida refers to the specificity of the experience of teletechnologies, but, though occurring on a greater scale, where each "live" moment "holds together the closest and that farthest away," it is not so very different from his description of the "how our present divides itself." In either case, "the *here-and-now* becomes uncertain."[71] No doubt informed by the technological developments that shaped Jonas's practice at the same historical moment, Derrida's critique of presence forms the philosophical underpinnings of telepresence: a presence invariably saturated with distance.

It is no coincidence, then, that Jonas's longest-standing critic brought poststructuralist philosophy to bear on what remains the most incisive critique of Jonas's practice. Upon the occasion of her first retrospective at the University Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley in 1980, Douglas Crimp influentially argued that Jonas's otherwise fundamentally heterogeneous and "eccentric" oeuvre was united by a single strategy of "de-synchronization."[72] This strategy at play in Jonas's performances

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[69] Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 51, 39. Translated transcript of improvised interview broadcast in France by the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel on December 22, 1993.
[70] Derrida and Stiegler, *Echographies of Television,* 39.
[71] Derrida and Stiegler, *Echographies of Television,* 79.
[72] Douglas Crimp served as the editor of *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968-1982*, a catalogue that, following Jonas's retrospective exhibition at the University Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley in 1980, he and Jonas collaborated on to document her work since the late 1960s. Crimp's introduction to the catalogue, "De-

and videos of the previous decade means that "there is no centered self from which the work can be said to be generated or by which it can be received. Both performer and spectator are shown to be decentered, split."[73] More recently, Crimp has reflected how, given his exposure to Derrida and others at the time, this philosophy "resonated with Jonas's performance works, which continued to absorb me throughout this entire period. Through both theory and practice, I saw subjectivity anew, as a delay."[74] The way that delay, distance, and difference inhered in the presence of the performing subject in Jonas's work was key for Crimp's pivotal thinking about a group of young artists that came to be known as the Pictures generation. In his essay for *Pictures*, the 1977 exhibition at Artists Space, Crimp cited Jonas's performances "using the simultaneous broadcast capacity of video" as key to an understanding of "representation of something absent to the condition of our apprehension of what is present."[75] It was in this sense that performance art was foundational for what Crimp articulated in his widely influential 1979 article "Pictures" as the groundbreaking approach taken by contemporary artists to representation—"representation not, however, conceived as the re-presentation of that which is prior, but a the unavoidable condition of intelligibility of even that which is present."[76] If an artistic turn toward not only representation but also toward identity and popular media have been linked to the Pictures generation as an inauguration of

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Synchronization in Joan Jonas's Performances," is cited in nearly every subsequent piece of writing on Jonas.

[73] Douglas Crimp, "De-Synchronization in Joan Jonas's Performances," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 8.

[74] Douglas Crimp, "Synchronies of De-Synchronization," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 139.

[75] Douglas Crimp, "Pictures" in *Pictures. An exhibition of the work of: Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, Philip Smith*. Artists Space, September 24 – October 29, 1977, 5.

[76] Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 77.

postmodernism, Jonas's approach to presence both undergirds and exceeds this art historical landmark. Forming a heterogeneous practice in which "that which is present" is also always a question of telepresence, Jonas's performances and videos of the 1970s invite a reconsideration of the relationship between seemingly postmodern conceptions of identity, subjectivity, and representation in the light of a deep genealogy of technologies of presence.

Chapter 1 | *Two If by Land*

"The resistance of distances having finally ceased, the world's expanse will lay down its arms, once known as duration, extension, and horizon."

– Paul Virilio[1]

In the spring of 1972, a unique televisual event took place in downtown Manhattan. It was the year that the Watergate scandal broke; the first reality television show, "An American Family," was in postproduction; and "The Price is Right" first aired on CBS. It was the season of the Easter Offensive in Vietnam, and the television sets that had for five years "brought the war home" again transmitted the distant conflict and its aftermath into American living rooms. Unlike these televisual spectacles, this local broadcast of sorts that took place on the Lower West Side was not actually televised. Rather than sitting in front of the set and tuning in, the viewer would find herself climbing to the roof of a five-story building on Greenwich Street and looking out from this elevated position (fig. 1.1). Facing west, a ten-block grid of streets bounding vacant lots and rubble-filled construction sites is visible. Pushing the limits of peripheral vision to the south and to the north, this expanse extends just past the elevated West Side Highway to the dilapidated shipping infrastructure along the Hudson River (fig. 1.2). The area is abandoned, save for a group of thirteen people dressed in white with orange headbands who make their way toward its perimeters, heading for the numbered signs stationed at various distances from the rooftop (fig. 1.3).

Several of the white-clad figures turn back toward the building. Holding a wooden block in each hand, they begin to clap in wide overhead arcs (fig. 1.4). The

[1] Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose (London: Verso, 1997), 119.

clapping appears both synched and stochastic; even as two figures are seen raising their arms in unison to smack the blocks together, their claps might not be audible at the same moment, depending on their distance from the roof. The interplay of sight and sound at a distance is at once orienting and disorienting, playing on the duly locational and dislocating effects of sound delay. Like a baseball player's swing glimpsed before the crack of the bat or a flash of lightning spotted before the roll of thunder, distance is the condition of perception reverberating in the title of this long-distance event orchestrated by Joan Jonas: *Delay Delay.*

Just as Jonas placed her spectators at a considerable remove from the action as it unfolded throughout the city blocks below, the performers were also kept at a distance from one another. In the furthest lot, couples are joined and held apart by twenty-foot lengths of scavenged plumbing pipe. Walking in circles and lines, they mimic the motion of a piston (fig. 1.5). A woman with poles stuck into her sleeves and pant legs appears nearby. She moves like a marionette, the stiff motions of her extended limbs corresponding to a set of handheld flags wielded by another performer stationed over a hundred paces away—so, as Jonas later recorded, "that there appears to be a remote-control connection to the puppetlike figure"[2] (fig. 1.6). Relationships are constellated across distances such that the space between two points is always the condition of communication within an ever-shifting configuration.

Delay Delay belongs to a series of large-scale outdoor performances that Jonas made between 1970 and 1972. A tidal flat flanked by sand dunes, a beach framed by precipitous cliffs, a flattened city waterfront became her theaters. The first of these

[2] Joan Jonas and Douglas Crimp, "Delay Delay," in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions 1968-1982*, ed. Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley and Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 36.

performances took place on Jones Beach in Queens in 1970, where Jonas placed her spectators on a hill a quarter of a mile away from a tidal flat that served as a stage (fig. 1.7). The following year, viewers watched through a notch in the coastal cliffs of Nova Scotia that framed a triangular slice of coastline one hundred feet below where Jonas and a friend danced along the water's edge (fig. 1.8). In 1972, Jonas chose the urban grid of Lower Manhattan as her stage. The performance staked out a network of empty lots abutting the Hudson River razed as part of a massive urban renewal project.

Jonas referred to the sounds and images sent and received at a distance in her outdoor performances as "signals." Her use of this term no doubt has an electronic ring. Jonas purchased a Sony portapak in 1970, the year of her first outdoor performance. Equipped with both camera and monitor linked in a portable closed circuit system, the portapak famously put televisual technology into the hands of artists. Yet while other artists began making videos for television broadcast, what was initially of interest to Jonas and her peers lay beyond the screen in the physical distances traversed and ostensibly collapsed by teletechnologies like TV. This involved exploring the phenomenology of perception and presence at a distance that were rapidly being redefined by technologies defined by their ability to overcome physical distance. These artists' seemingly elemental approaches to audiovisual signal stake out particular geographic terrains while gesturing toward a deeper history of long-distance communication.

Though Jonas did not bring video into these early performances (as she later would), this chapter examines her outdoor performances as part of a televisual imaginary constellating artists across dance, video, site-specific sculpture, and land art in the 1970s

that reimagined "seeing at a distance" through outmoded means of telecommunication. As performers waved flags and flashed mirrors at spectators, they recalled embodied techniques of optical telegraphy developed for military and land survey operations in the nineteenth century that gave rise to teletechnological networks that would eventually map the globe. Linking the gestures of performance and the environmental scale of land art, Jonas's outdoor works reconfigure the relationship between these two spheres of artistic activity that appear to resist technological mediation. Correlating corporeal and geopolitical registers, Jonas's acts of signaling implicate the body and the landscape in historically militarized modes of telecommunication that traverse and organize the physical distances they appear to collapse.

Seeing at a Distance

In the spring of 1970, Jonas traveled to Japan with her then partner Richard Serra, who was participating the Tokyo Biennale. While Serra was drawn to the Zen gardens as he developed his first site-specific sculptures, Jonas avidly attended Japanese theater, particularly Noh and Kabuki. She was taken with a Noh theater housed in a fourteenth century shrine on the island of Itsukushima on the Inland Sea, where, over the course of the performance, the incoming tide fills the gap between the audience and the stage. The fluid volume and the tidal clock heightened the experience of the spatiotemporal divide integral to Noh, where ancient, sacred dramas were originally performed in structures separate from the audience.[3] This particular theater inspired a version of *Delay Delay* that

[3] Donald Keene, *Nō and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 19.

Jonas performed for Italian audiences in 1972. In Rome, spectators sat on the banks of the Tiber River while the performance took place on the opposite Trastevere bank. As in the New York version of *Delay Delay*, large signs painted with numbers marked different distances along the bank, where performers clapped wooden blocks at the outset of the performance. Performers also banged on mooring rings and clapped from the bridges that marked the horizontal limits of the piece. A heavy rope was extended across the river; during the performance, six men attempted the Sisyphean task of lifting the soaked cord from the water (fig. 1.9). In a photograph documenting the performance, Jonas and Serra are pictured walking through a circle of black and white stones. They grasp opposite ends of a rope: Jonas closer to the camera and Serra further away (fig. 1.10). This connection at a distance is emblematic of Jonas's outdoor performances, where ample space was the condition of how performers interacted with one another and the faraway spectators across a variety of landscapes. The image of Serra and Jonas linked at a distance also echoes the genesis of *Shift*, a sculpture Serra began upon returning from Japan in 1970 and finished in 1972.

Like Jonas's outdoor performances, Serra's first large-scale site-specific sculpture geminated from seeing at a distance (fig. 1.11). *Shift* was inspired by what Yve-Alain Bois has described as the "deambulatory space and peripatetic vision" of the Zen gardens Serra visited in Japan.[4] Elaborating the embodied encounter invited by minimalist sculptures, the spatiotemporal experience of *Shift* would take place on a long-distance

[4] Yve-Alain Bois, "A Picturesque Stroll around 'Clara-Clara,'" *October* Vol. 29 (Summer 1984), 34. As Bois argues, all of Serra's sculptural production, whether designed for a rural landscape, urban setting, or architectural interior, may be traced to a set of concerns forged in 1970: that moment when "he took an interest, starting with a trip to Japan where for six weeks he admired the Zen gardens of Myoshin-ji, in deambulatory space and peripatetic vision."

scale. Serra's account puts the Japanese gardens into dialogue with American land art such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* and Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, which he and Jonas visited after returning from Japan.[5] As James Nisbet has noted, the bodily scale of *Shift* "mediates one's awareness of spatial position within the surrounding site,"[6] bridging the concerns of minimalism with land art.

Serra began to stake out *Shift* in a field north of Toronto with Jonas following their trips to Japan and the American Southwest. As Serra has described, the vast scale of the sculpture was determined by the furthest possible distance he and Jonas could maintain on opposite sides of a field while keeping one another in view.

> In the summer of 1970, Joan (Jonas) and I spent five days walking the place. We discovered that two people walking the distance of the field opposite one another, attempting the keep one another in view despite the curvature of the land, would mutually determine a topological definition of the space.[7]

Like Jonas's outdoor performances, the parameters of this work were established at the limits of human perception. "The boundaries of the work became the maximum distance two people could occupy and still keep each other in view."[8] If the mobile and embodied spectatorship sought by the minimalists was the starting point for *Shift*, rather than a

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[5] Serra noted the importance of his experience in Japan in an interview with Liza Bear in a 1978 issue of *Avalanche*: "There was a convergence of events that made me rethink scale. I had completed a series of large scale stacking pieces with Kaiser Steel; I helped Bob Smithson stake out *Spiral Jetty* and later I visited the Zen Gardens of Kyoto, Mio Sinji, Ryoan-Ji, Tokai-An, and upon my return I visited Heizer's *Double Negative*." Reprinted in Richard Serra and Clara Weyergraf, *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970-1980* (Yonkers: The Hudson River Museum, 1980), 70.

[6] James Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in Art of the 1960s and 1970s* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), 120.

[7] Serra, "Shift." Edited by Rosalind Krauss and originally published in *Arts Magazine*, 1973. Reprinted in *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970-1980*, 25.

[8] Serra, "Shift," 25.

sense of physical immediacy, distance was the seed of the sculpture's phenomenology. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Rosalind Krauss emphasized this relationship between distance and the phenomenological encounter through her pairing of *Shift* with Alberto Giacometti's sculptures. As Krauss writes, Giacometti's attenuated figures have been understood as "representing distance."

> It was understood as a representation of "seeing at a distance" that no examination of the work close-to would dissipate and no magnification would disperse. For the object carried as its meaning the mark of the viewer's separation from it; the sculpture represented a human body forever caught in the aureole of the beholder's look, bearing forever the trace of what it means to be seen *by* another *from* the place from which he views. The indistinctness, the elongation, the frontality of Giacometti's figures were all understood to be these marks of the beholder's distant gaze.[9]

If Giacometti's sculptures always appear at a distance no matter how close the viewer gets, they are essentially relational: "bearing forever the trace of what it means to be seen *by* another *from* the place from which he views." It is perhaps no coincidence that Jonas's early (and no longer extant) sculptural oeuvre that preceded her transition to performance was primarily inspired by Giacometti.[10] As a hinge between Jonas and Serra, Giacometti's work puts "seeing at a distance" at the heart of the phenomenological encounter.

Though the territorial expanse of *Shift* was defined through the relationship between two people at a distance as they negotiated the landscape, the experience of the sculpture ultimately concerns the relationship between the viewer and the land structured

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[9] Rosalind Krauss, "Richard Serra: A Translation" (1983), in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 263.
[10] Jonas worked in a figural mode with quick-drying plaster to achieve the "lightness" she admired in Giacometti's sculpture. Joan Jonas, "On Sculpture," May 15, 1964. Essay submitted in partial fulfillment for MFA degree in sculpture awarded by Columbia University. Joan Jonas Archive.

by these long-distance parameters.[11] While Jonas and Serra conjointly established the limits of the sculpture, the stepped walls that make up *Shift* were determined by the curvature of the terrain contained by these mutually determined boundaries. Six concrete slabs were wedged into the uneven ground, the size of each wall measuring the horizontal length it takes the land to drop five feet—a measure that, in keeping with the scale of much minimalist sculpture, also corresponds to the dimensions of the body. As Nisbet observes, it is in this sense that *Shift* mediates between the viewer's body and the surrounding topography, generating a continually shifting system of measurement that defies standard cartographic metrics.[12] Rather than offering a view of a large expanse of land, *Shift* invited the viewer into that expanse by continuously plumbing its depth; submitting what would be the two-dimensional nature of a long-distance view to the three-dimensional experience of sculpture. "The result," Serra wrote, "is a way of measuring oneself against the indeterminacy of the land."[13] Jonas's outdoor works would likewise communicate information about the given terrain. Yet in contrast to *Shift*'s invitation into the landscape, the perceptual experience offered by Jonas's outdoor works was embodied and relational but insisted on seeing at a distance. As Serra would later remark, "I was more interested in a penetration into the land that would open the field and bring you into it bodily, not just draw you into it visually."[14] Jonas, in contrast, committed to never allow her performers or spectators to penetrate space, retaining the flattened quality of seeing at a distance as a condition of perception.

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[11] As Krauss describes, the "subject matter" of the otherwise abstract sculpture is the bridging of the spectator's horizon with that of the world. Krauss, 270.
[12] Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems,* 120.
[13] Serra, "Shift," 25.
[14] Quoted in Lynne Cooke, "Thinking on Your Feet: Richard Serra's Sculptures in Landscape," *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years*, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 84.

While in Tokyo, Jonas and Serra bought a portapak from Sony and began experimenting with video (or continued experimenting, as Leo Castelli had video equipment that could be borrowed from the gallery). What would have been immediately apparent about this newly available technology was its way of flattening space. In addition to the potential for instant feedback, the flattened image of video was what set it apart from film. Noting how the "video image tends to be more flat (two-dimensional)" than the film image, Richard Kostelanetz compared video to books: "because the television screen is small and perceptually distant."[15] Mona da Vinci, meanwhile, likened the video image to Byzantine mosaics: "Collapsed space is flat and shows no depth but a nonreceding, infinite background. Figures and ornaments are all parallel to the picture plane."[16] Mary Anne Doane has described how video's flattening of space extends to the television image. As Doane writes, "the simultaneous activation of different, incongruous spaces (the studio, graphics, footage from the scene, interviews on monitor) is suggestive of a writing surface and the consequent annihilation of depth."[17] In 1979, Robin White observed Jonas's "interest in combining two dimensional and three dimensional space" in her early work of the 1970s as correlating to both "the idea of space, the way that people perceive things" and "the way that, on a television screen, things that exist three dimensionally become totally flattened out."[18] Though she did not use her new video

[15] Richard Kostelanetz, "Literary Video," in *New Artists Video*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1978), 41.
[16] Mona da Vinci, "Video: The Art of Observable Dreams," in *New Artists Video*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1978), 15.
[17] Mary Ann Doane, "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe" (1990), *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, ed. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 253.
[18] Robin White in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979." *View* Vol. II No. I (April 1979), 17-18.

equipment in her outdoor performances, Jonas would engage this "optical switching," as she called it, through a more rudimentary form of television: seeing at a distance.[19]

In Jonas's outdoor pieces, sheer distance produced the flattening effect of the television screen. The view from Jonas's house on Cape Breton Island provides a striking instance of this phenomenon: looking West from her deck onto the Bay of Saint Laurence, the sky appears stacked above the sea, which rises like a wall from the wooded land below (fig. 1.12). A similar view is captured in a photograph of *Nova Scotia Beach Dance*, which Jonas performed up the road in 1971. Looking down from a precipice between two cliffs where Jonas performed with Nancy Topf on the beach one hundred feet below, the sand appears as a flattened triangle framed by the sea and the sloping bluffs (fig. 1.8). Yet, in her outdoor performances, the same condition of distance also enabled Jonas to plumb and demarcate depth that disrupted the perceptual illusion of flatness. In *Nova Scotia Beach Dance*, a long pole and a length of cloth doubled as graphic marks (lines and circles) and tools for physically measuring these shapes in space. This oscillation between flatness and depth runs through Jonas's outdoor performances, collating televisual space and seeing at a distance.

The relationship between flatness and depth informed the vignettes in Jonas's first outdoor performance, *Jones Beach Piece*. For this work, Jonas invited an audience to Jones Beach in 1970. Spectators stood on a hill a quarter a mile away from a mud flat bordered by dunes where the performance took place. *Jones Beach Piece* began by mapping of the space flattened by distance: "A single performer walks to the middle of the flat expanse and calls in four different directions: 'north,' 'south,' 'east,' 'west.'

[19] Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979," 18.

Hidden, the other performers answer, establishing points of the compass with their voices."[20] Later, the performers incorporated depth into these coordinates through the use of sound. Following a nude sprint by Jonas from dune to dune, a man emerges "wearing a large sheet of tinlike armor" that spans the width of his shoulders, so that as "he runs, the tin makes the sound of thunder." He is chased by another man who throws rocks at the tin, adding a percussive element to the thunderous armor. "They zigzag through the flats, the sound following them."[21] The cacophony that trailed behind the performers as they traversed the flattened expanse gave the distant audience some sense of depth. The next vignette elaborated this phenomenon of sound delay as a woman joined the two men, forming a diagonal line receding from the closest to the farthest point of the performance area. "In sequence they clap blocks of wood together, the sound delays progressively diminishing the closer the performer stands to the spectators."[22] Lizzie Borden later noted "the archetypal content of wood-clapping, which reminds one of the delay between lightening and thunder."[23] Because the speed of sound lags behind the speed of light, the temporal interval between sight and sound allows for an intuitive (or, as with the delay between lightening and thunder, a more calculated) grasp of distance: a depth measure that informs the perception of flattened images in the distance.

Two years later, the eponymous "delay" of *Delay Delay* would again add a measure of depth to what appeared as a distant two-dimensional image. Like the "flat expanse" of *Jones Beach Piece,* this 1972 performance took place across an swath of New York City both razed by construction and flattened by distance, as spectators looked

[20] Jonas and Crimp, "Jones Beach Piece, 1970," *Scripts and Descriptions*, 27.
[21] Jonas and Crimp, "Jones Beach Piece, 1970," 27.
[22] Jonas and Crimp, "Jones Beach Piece, 1970," 27.
[23] Lizzie Borden, "The New Dialectic," *Artforum* 12, no. 6 (March 1974), 47.

out from a rooftop of one of the buildings spared from the "renewal" of this area of downtown Manhattan. "Jonas perceives the space of the performing area as a flat plane that meets the horizon," Janelle Reiring, who performed in *Delay Delay*, wrote in a piece on Jonas's outdoor work published in *TDR*. "On or against that plane she superimposes a moving drawing."[24] As Reiring described, the graphic shapes in this "drawing" doubled as devices that measure distance. For instance, a length of pipe that both connected two performers and held them apart was at once a yardstick of the distance between them and a line dancing across a plane. "The pole served to keep the distance between the two people equal at all times, though when viewed across the flat space, it appeared that this distance was continually changing."[25] Sound delay enhanced the audience's sense of depth, this time demarcated by large numbered signs marking various paces from the building on Greenwich Street where the audience stood. The performance began with performers in different numbered lots clapping, alerting the audience to both their presence and their positions through comparative delays between the motion for clapping and the sound of the clap. Reiring reported that during a rehearsal, Jonas remarked: "People in the space are flattened and dream-like in that their movement is silent. One has the feeling of non-reality because the [kinetic] connection is lost over a distance, and they are self-contained; they do not relate to the audience." As Reiring observed, Jonas "used the clapping throughout the piece to provide this physical connection between the audience and the performers in the distance."[26] If the wooden claps charted depth, they were also relational, appealing to the audience's attention as they plumbed different

[24] Janelle Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" *The Drama Review: TDR* Vol. 16 No. 3 (September 1972), 144.
[25] Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" 147.
[26] Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" 145. Brackets are Reiring's.

distances through sound delay. In this way, the clapping served to signal to the audience across the physical distance it simultaneously mapped.

In the years surrounding *Delay Delay*, 1971 and 1973, the choreographer Trisha Brown organized an outdoor dance nearby the grid of lots taken over by Jonas that similarly involved long-distance communication. For *Roof Piece* (fig. 1.13), individual dancers dressed in red occupied a line of roofs stretching across twelve blocks from Wooster to Lafayette Street in the first version and nine blocks from West Broadway to White Street in the second. The choreography was based on semaphore: a telegraphic technique that encodes messages through the positions of the arms and/or handheld flags that preceded electronic telegraphy. The original piece, which was a private performance, involved twelve dance students in a chain akin to the game telephone: a line of transmission based on choreographic pedagogy. "The method of transmitting the movement, copying, is a technique used in dance classes and rehearsals for learning steps…effecting the transference of information," Brown later wrote.[27] Expanding choreographic transfer into the urban geography, Brown designed steps based on semaphore: a signaling system using the positioning of the arms or a set of flags according to a certain code to transfer messages long-distance (fig. 1.14). "Simple, semaphor-like [sic] movement (joint articulation and perpendicular and parallel lines) was continuously transmitted from one dancer to another."[28] Halfway through the performance, the line of communication switched direction. During the second, public performance, the audience was stationed on rooftops, as in *Delay Delay*. Spectators stood

[27] Trisha Brown, "Roof and Fire Piece, 1973," in *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue 1961-2001* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 314.
[28] Trisha Brown, "Three Pieces," *The Drama Review: TDR,* Vol. 19 No. 1 (March 1975), 26.

either atop a building at the midway point or at the end of the line (others became accidental spectators by looking up or out their windows). In the second version, performers tried to be as accurate as possible, yet fidelity was lost as nuanced gestures were transferred according to the logic of optical telegraphy. Yet by transforming semaphore into dance steps, Brown recalled how these telegraphs, which used a range of signals to convey information across great distances at the speed of light before electricity, originated with the human body as signaling device.

The long-distance performances by Jonas and Brown as well as the telecommunicative starting point of *Shift* evoke the Czech philosopher Vilém Flusser's phenomenological approach to television developed in the 1970s. For Flusser, telecommunication is not first and foremost technological. Rather, it hinges on the condition of distance that always inheres between self and other. Flusser articulated this perspective at the "Open Circuits" conference at The Museum of Modern Art in 1974, in which both Jonas and Serra also participated. While Flusser was also taken with Jonas's videos screened during the conference, his talk recalled the rudimentary approach to telecommunication of her earlier outdoor performances.[29] Emblematic of Flusser's phenomenological approach to television, his lecture delivered at the conference, titled "Two Approaches to the Phenomenon, Television," explored the technology's dialogic

[29] In January of 1974, Jonas attended the "Open Circuits" conference at The Museum of Modern Art, which brought together artists, curators, and thinkers to discuss "The New Television: A Public/Private Art," as the published conference proceedings were later titled. "Open Circuits" consisted of screenings of artists' videos, panels, and lectures. In the unpublished transcript from a panel that included Jonas, the moderator mentions says: "To my right is Joan Jonas whose work we also saw on the first day, and she doesn't know this but highly praised by Mr. Flusser." The Archives of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, Avalanche Collection, Folder III.72.

potential.[30] Likening the TV set to a window, Flusser traces the origins of television to a conversation between neighbors, who lean out of their windows to speak with once another.

> The important thing to keep in mind, if one considers talking out of the window to others, is the fact that there is no physical contact between the partners. It is a case of "telecommunication." One sees and hears the partner without touching him concretely. What one sees is the "Gestalt" of the partner in its context, and his gestures, which aim at transmitting some message.[31]

Rather than the fantasy of immediacy generated by electronic communication, Flusser returns television to an elementary form of telecommunication where distance, rather than instantaneous transmission, is the condition of interacting with another person. Like Giacometti's elongated figures "bearing forever the trace of what it means to be seen *by* another *from* the place from which he views," distance is necessary not only for perceiving the neighbor's message but fully recognizing her in her context. In locating the origins of TV in such a seemingly elementary mode of exchange, Flusser also

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[30] As Martha Schwendener has written, "Two Approaches to the Phenomenon, Television" is ultimately concerned with recognizing the other, but doing so through surfaces and screens—anticipating the concerns of Flusser's later technical image writings. See Martha Schwendener, "The Photographic Universe: Vilém Flusser's Theories of Photography, Media, and Digital Culture," PhD diss., CUNY, 2016. http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/693/.

[31] Vilém Flusser, "Two Approaches to the Phenomenon, Television," in *The New Television: A Public/Private Art: Essays, Statements, and Videotapes Based on "Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television" Organized by Fred Barzyk, Douglas Davis, Gerald O'Grady, and Willard Van Dyke for the Museum of Modern Art New York City*, ed. Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978), 246.

illuminates a genealogy of signaling in the embodied "gestures, which aim at transmitting some message" that preceded electronic transmission.

Jonas referred to her own gestures at a distance in her outdoor performances as "signals." Jonas and Douglas Crimp wrote that *Jones Beach Piece*, the first of her large-scale outdoor performances, "consists of a series of signals sent to the spectators through the landscape."[32] In 1975, Jonas would identify "the transmission of signals through a dislocating medium, such as a very deep landscape that creates delays and relays of the signal"[33] as one of her primary strategies. Like Brown's semaphore dancers, Jonas's performers are human signaling devices. In *Jones Beach Piece*, for instance, Jonas, wearing wooden welding shoes, carried a shovel and a red bag of shells to the middle of a large mud flat. After dumping out the shells and tossing them into the air with the shovel, she then tied the bag to its handle to fashion a red flag that she waved at the audience, akin to Brown's semaphore and the flags used in *Delay Delay* to "remote-control" a marionette-like figure. As the wooden claps sent sharp rapports to the audience as the sound delay plumbed the depth of the landscape, Jonas's outdoor performances also staked out the physical terrains that are integral to telecommunications, even as these technologies appear to overcome distance. "At that distance perception itself becomes focused down toward the reception of signals, and the piece was shaped by the way that the space related to or intervened in the processing of these signals."[34] The environment is engaged as both a source of information and a source of noise, variously carrying, delaying, and separating audio and visual signals sent by the performers. Oscillating

[32] Jonas and Crimp, "Jones Beach Piece, 1970" 27.
[33] Joan Jonas with Rosalind Krauss, "Seven Years," *The Drama Review: TDR* Vol. 19 No. 1 (March 1975), 13.
[34] Jonas with Krauss, "Seven Years," 14.

between flattened televisual image and deep landscape, Jonas's outdoor performances illuminate a genealogy of signal that shows how the body and the physical environment are incorporated into systems of telecommunication that seem to evacuate both.

Television War

In 1971, in the midst of their large-scale outdoor projects, Jonas and Serra collaborated on a film about long-distance communication based a seemingly antiquated source: the lantern signal devised by Paul Revere during the American Revolution. Deadpan and didactic, *Paul Revere* catalogues the unexpected intricacies of this outwardly simple communication system. The opening shot shows Jonas and Serra's hands each grasping a large light bulb. "The film you are viewing will demonstrate, with your attention and cooperation, aspects of an operative process in communication," Jonas announces off-screen. "A simple two-message system will be employed: The informational model of Paul Revere's signaling light tower will be the example…"[35] Several days prior to his famed "midnight ride," Revere, a silversmith who devised alarm systems around the port of Boston, instructed the sexton of the North Church to alert the Colonial militia stationed across the Charles River to the movement of British troops using two lanterns installed in the steeple. One lantern would signify the army's choice of an overland route, while two lanterns meant that they were coming across the river. In the film, the hand-held light bulbs correspond to the lantern code: "one if by land, two if by sea."

[35] All quotations from Joan Jonas and Richard Serra, *Paul Revere*, in *Artforum* Vol. X, No. 1 (September 1971): 65-67.

In the vein of structural films made by the couple's friend Michael Snow and others, *Paul Revere* unfolds according to a predetermined schema: the methodical enhancement of the basic lantern code with cross-references (another lantern, a church bell) that would verify Revere's signal. These cross-references, which become maddeningly complex, are designed to deal with potential contingencies: anxious farmers who, jolted from their sleep, think that the double flame is a hallucination, or Boston teenagers who sneak into the tower and light the lanterns for fun. The film employs cards with quotations from the narration that are successively revealed to mimic "wipes" (cinematic transitions where one image is visibly replaced by another) as well as demonstrative actions performed by Jonas and Serra. The handheld light bulbs and bells are used to exemplify the cross-referencing procedure of the church lanterns and bell towers, for instance, while an emphatically placed hand aids the viewer in making her way through the text (fig. 1.15). The simple gesture of a lantern being lit and turned up to reveal a windowpane indicates the potential mischief wrought by the local teenagers, while a glowing light that silhouettes a curly head of hair (Serra's) depicts the paranoid farmer. Throughout the film, the technical jargon of the voiceover contrasts with the limited economy of action. The tight frame typically admits only a single body part—often just the hands—as if matters of signaling are best articulated through gesticulation.

At the moment they were experimenting with electronic technology in the form of their new video equipment, Jonas and Serra harken back to a moment when physical space and the body itself were integral to the communication techniques that predated (and even operated alongside) the electronic telegraph. The years following the American Revolution saw the conversion of age-old techniques of communicating at a distance—

smoke signals and bonfires, horns and drums, etc.—into modern telecommunications networks, beginning with the electrical telegraph, first developed in the 1830s. According to Jonathan Sterne, "[m]any of the key accounts of telegraph history place it as the first major electronic medium in American history and often as a precursor of the modern mass media."[36] The historical significance of the electrical telegraph lay in its ability to instantaneously link distant locales, enabling a technologized immediacy between people who were not physically present to one another. As John Durham Peters wrote, as it harnessed the speed of electricity, the telegraph seemed to announce that "communication could now take place regardless of impediments such as distance or embodiment."[37] With the optical and sonic telegraphs that predated electronic telegraphy such as the lights and bells featured in *Paul Revere*, however, "impediments such as distance or embodiment" are not simply overcome, but fastidiously reorganized (in the film, ad nauseam). Rather than transcended by electricity, these "impediments" were technologized through signaling infrastructures and embodied techniques of encoding information before the advent of the electric telegraph.

In 1800, thirty years before the advent of electronic telegraphy, the verb "to signal"—"to make known (a fact event, message, etc.) by a signal or signals"—entered the English dictionary.[38] The turn of the nineteenth century marks the transformation of the signal—a mark, gesture, or object used to convey information—into a kind of performance. This activation of signal as a verb was dramatized in 1796, when Joseph

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[36] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). 140. Sterne cites media histories by Harold Innis, Menahem Blondheim, and Daniel Czitrom, and James Carey.
[37] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 5.
[38] "Signal," *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

Chudy, a Hungarian composer and inventor, put on a one-act opera titled *The Telegraph or, the Tele-typewriter*. Siegfried Zielinski has described the opera performed by Chudy with his "telegraph," a piano-like device of his design. The device consisted of five lights controlled by a keyboard, which Chudy originally intended to transmit long-distance messages. The lights could also be accompanied or replaced by sequences of drums or bells: tools for encoding information that doubled as the score.[39] The opera was designed to draw attention to Chudy's telegraphic prototype, which had failed to gain funding, in the wake of the appearance of a rival invention in France in 1792: Claude Chappe's *tachygraphe*. Originally developed to transfer military dispatches between Paris and Lille during the revolution, the *tachygraphe* consisted of a series of semaphore relay stations that eventually spanned all of France. Installed ten to twenty miles apart, the stations were equipped with telescopes and movable wooden arms that were configured into different positions corresponding to a codebook.[40] As Zielinski remarks, what is striking about Chudy's opera is that its title names two devices—the telegraph and the typewriter—that did not yet exist as technological artifacts.[41] Rather than technological artifacts, the telegraph and the tele-typewriter named technologized acts of signaling.

Like the messages transmitted by the *tachygraphe* and Paul Revere's signaling light tower along lines of sight, Chudy's telegraph hinged on the encoding of information: in this case, permutations of binary code that corresponded to letters of the

[39] Siegfried Zielinski, "An Audiovisual Telegraph from Hungary" in *Deep Time of the Media: Toward and Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means,* trans. Gloria Custance (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 183-185. Zielinski's discussion of the opera is based on a pamphlet written by Chudy in the advance of his production; neither the libretto nor score of this opera remain.
[40] Jonathan Sterne, "Compression: A Loose History," *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*, ed. Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 43.
[41] Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media,* 183.

Hungarian alphabet.[42] Though "[c]ountless media historians have cited electric telegraphy as the first modern communication medium and have attributed to it all sorts of significant innovations and effects," Sterne has argued that the key innovation in conveying information across great distances was not electrification (which became a possibility earlier in the eighteenth century) but the possibility of "more elaborate codes."[43] The extensive coding system enabled by Chappe's *tachygraphe* (with 196 possible arm positions corresponding to a sophisticated codebook) allowed for the "compression" of information that would ultimately serve to send signals over vast geographic distances. While the possibility of the electric telegraph arose as early as 1753, the design did not become viable until coding systems were developed Samuel Morse and Cooke and Wheatstone to effectively compress the information delivered through electronic signal.[44] Though the instantaneity of electricity would seem to overcome the limitations of the body, the longer-standing function of signal as compression rather than electronic pulse revealed by early modes of optical telegraphy illuminates the role of the body as a signaling device. The movable "arms" of Chappe's towers remediated another form of telecommunication—handheld semaphore flags—which, despite less elaborate codes, continued to be used in military operations.

[42] As Zielinski describes, Chudy's device consisted of five different lights arranged side by side. "With these five lights, Chudy represents the letters of the entire alphabet as different combinations of their possible states—light on or off. Thus it is a binary code, with permutations of five places" (183). Revere's light tower operated according to a similar principle, where three different combinations of the on/off states of the two lanterns communicated different messages: both off: no British; both on: British by sea; one on: British by land.
[43] Sterne, "Compression," 43.
[44] Sterne, "Compression," 43.

Friedrich Kittler identified the electric telegraph as "the first step on the road to information technology."[45] Yet as the appearance of the verb "to signal" in 1800 as a composite of human action and technological transmission suggests, the emergence of telegraphy challenges Kittler's influential organization of media history into "discourse networks" that operate along the axes of 1800 and 1900. This schema divides the literate media of the nineteenth century based on natural language and the technical media of the twentieth based on numerical codes written and read by machines.[46] The genealogy of telegraphic signaling leads to what Kate Maddalena and Jeremy Packer have identified as "an uncomfortable place between Discourse Network 1800 and 1900 and on the way to contemporary technical media," where "flame, bodies, birds and mountains become parts of the media apparatus."[47] In their study of the use of the flag semaphore systems used by the United States Signaling Corps during the Civil War, where a binary code of alternating flag positions known as a "wigwag" was used to encode and convey information to and from the battlefield, Maddalena and Packer challenge Kittler's notorious excision of the human from the history of technical media.[48] "Media technology didn't just erase the so-called human body in one easy jump; rather, media

[45] Friedrich Kittler, "The History of Communication Media," 1996. Ctheory.net. n.p. http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=45

[46] Sterne's idea of the "aesthetics of compression" challenges the idea that signal is a purely machinic register; as their title suggests, Kittler is engaged more pointedly by Kate Maddalena and Jeremy Packer in "The Digital Body: Telegraphy as Discourse Network," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2015 Vol. 32 (I) 93-117.

[47] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 108.

[48] As Peters wrote in his introduction to Kittler's *Optical Media*, for instance: Kittler "has no use for the category of 'the human' or 'experience.' He gives us a media studies without people." Peters, "Introduction: Friedrich Kittler's Light Shows," in Kittler, *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999*, trans. Anthony Enns (New York: Polity Press, 2010), 5. Maddalena and Packer cite Sybille Krämer, who identifies Kittler's rejection of the idea of human bodies as media as an obstacle to those wishing to engage his media theory. See Krämer, "The Cultural Techniques of Time-Axis Manipulation on Friedrich Kittler's Conception of Media," *Theory, Culture, & Society* 2006 Vol. 23 (7-8): 93-109.

incorporated the human body; media technologies required the human in order to constitute itself."[49] Rather that simply overcoming the body through the capabilities of electricity, Civil War "soldier-mediums" indicate how the human body is incorporated into media systems through conditioning and enculturation that produce new forms of technologized embodiment inseparable from militarized motives and structures of power.[50]

In addition to the centrality of the human body in the development of long-distance communication, Maddalena and Packer's study illuminates the key role of the physical environment in the rise of teletechnologies from the battlefield. "Architecture and terrain are, in this system of mediation, at once sources of noise and means of overcoming it," they write. "Mountains, steeples, houses, rooftops, scaffolds – the landscape itself becomes infrastructure for the Signal Corps apparatus – the discourse network."[51] Key to this communication structure embedded in natural and built environments was the mapping of these terrains. If electronic teletechnologies appear to collapse distance, the genealogy of older forms of optical telegraphy bound up with military operations emphasize the organization and control of space that undergirds the experience of instantaneous connection across vast geographies. Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski have underscored the geopolitical nature of media infrastructures. "Interwoven with political-economic agendas, media infrastructures have historically been used in efforts to claim and reorganize territories and temporal relations. Their material dependence on lands, raw materials, and energy imbricates them within issues of

[49] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 97.
[50] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 104, 106. While drawing on James Carey's theory of ritual communication, the authors liken this process to Kittler's "programming." Moreover, they draw on Foucault's notion of the "docile body."
[51] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 109.

finance, urban planning, and natural resource development."[52] Examining the spatial dimensions of outmoded signaling systems illuminates media infrastructures not visible onscreen.[53]

The genealogy of signal invoked by *Paul Revere* reveals another key element of long-distance media: they have thoroughly military origins. From the Revolutionary and Civil Wars in America to the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, the development of optical telegraphy is tied to military operations. As this history shows, signaling is not just about communicating, but mapping and positioning in service to the militarized colonization of space. As Maddalena and Packer write, citing Paul Virilio, "Mapping time/space coordinates for strategic advantage is the ultimate goal of military knowledge."[54] Given this history, Jonas and Serra's citation of this seemingly random example from the American Revolution in their film takes on added significance in the context of the conflict that, in 1971, still filled American consciousness, not least by media coverage abroad and at home: the war in Vietnam. In the midst of the first "television war," Jonas and Serra mined the roots of telecommunication in military techniques for controlling and monitoring space that are inseparable from communicating across it. A striking example of the use of the airwaves in the war itself is the story of Jeremiah Denton, an American prisoner of war in northern Vietnam, blinked "t-o-r-t-u-r-e" in Morse code during a Japanese-taped televised propaganda interview that was broadcast in America in 1966. Feigning to be blinded by the spotlights, Denton "telegraphed" his treatment as a prisoner of war in code to the television audience.

[52] Lisa Parks and Nicole Starosielski, "Introduction," *Signal Traffic*, 5.
[53] Maddalena and Packer stress this point in their analysis of the wigwag, 101. This is also part of what Parks and Starosielski call for as a need to look beyond screened content to the infrastructures of signal traffic.
[54] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 110.

Toward the end of Jonas and Serra's film, the premise of Revere's signaling system—namely, that the British are in fact going to attack—is thrown into question: "What if they are landing on a peaceful excursion? Or what if the French decide to take advantage of this situation and are mistaken for the British?" Here the militaristic drive to eliminate human noise and uncertainty from conflict at a distance blunts receptivity. As Maddalena and Packer write, "War asks us to reduce such uncertainty in a realm where uncertainty rules."[55] Here the exactitude of a signaling system is rendered useless by militaristic assumptions—evoking an episode recounted by Hillel Schwartz, where echoing radar signals in the Tonkin Gulf were mistaken for enemy fire and returned, effectively launching the Vietnam War in 1962.[56] With their requirement of extreme receptivity and attention to distant signals flickering within coastal landscapes, Jonas's long-distance performances alluded to the stakes of sending signals under strained diplomacy, where both distance and openness are required to see "the partner in its context, and his gestures, which aim at transmitting some message." At the same time, these works subtly engaged the military origins of telecommunications that underpin everyday experiences of presence and perception at a distance. One of Jonas's signaling devices in particular would indicate this continuity between the long-distance battlefield and the contemporary urban landscape as performers pulsed sunlight toward spectators with the simple tilt of a mirror.

Sun Signals

[55] Maddalena and Packer, "The Digital Body," 115.
[56] Hillel Schwartz, *Making Noise: From Babel to the Big Bang and Beyond* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 26-28.

Mirrors are one of Jonas's signature props. As she has remarked, "I chose as my first technological tool the mirror, a device that transmits light."[57] The "technological" aspect of Jonas's use of mirrors has been linked to the mirror-like instant feedback provided by video.[58] Jonas herself has referred to the video monitor as "an ongoing mirror."[59] In her outdoor performances that explored television without the use of video, however, mirrors took on a different role. In one sequence in *Jones Beach Piece*, for instance, Jonas emerged from behind a dune wearing a white hockey mask and a twenty-foot train of blue silk. Picking up a rectangular mirror laying in the mud, she climbed a ladder and used the mirror to flash sunlight into the eyes of spectators. As Jonas put it, the mirror generated a "sun signal to the audience."[60] By harnessing the speed of light, this particular mode of signaling through pulses of sunlight mimics the instantaneity of electronic signal. Yet the media archaeology surrounding the "sun signal" opens onto a prehistory of electronic teletechnologies that makes visible the way these technologies map, control, and militarize the spaces they appear to collapse.

In 1973, Jonas translated her 1972 performance of *Delay Delay* into a film titled *Songdelay*. The cinematic version of the outdoor performance was shot by Robert Fiore on 16mm using wide-angle and telephoto lenses. Fiore, who also worked with Serra on his films, co-edited the 18:35 minute film with Jonas. The use of lenses and editing combined to capture the experience of seeing at a distance at play in the original performance. In an early sequence in the film, for instance, a telephoto lens is used to

[57] Jonas, "Oad Lau (1968), Wind (1968)," in *Joan Jonas: Performance Video Installation 1968-2000*, ed. Johann-Karl Schmidt (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 70.
[58] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* Vol. 1 (Spring 1976): 50-64.
[59] Joan Jonas, "Transmission," *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 122.
[60] Quoted in "Joan Jonas," ed. Germano Celant, *Casabella* no. 370 (October 1972), 39.

capture a performer clapping in the distance. Standing on the edge of a pier, he appears diminutive before the facade of a large building on the other side of the waterway. Filling the screen behind him, the gridded facade enhances the flattening effect of the long-distance shot. The man raises his arms to hit two wooden blocks together. His claps, recorded in close up, can be heard a split second after the wooden blocks collide above his head, replicating the sound delay that was a structuring principle of the original outdoor performance through sound editing. If the delay disrupts the synchronized sound expected from film, it also restores a measure of depth to the flattened image.

In a brief review of *Songdelay* for *The New York Times* following its premier at the Castelli Gallery on June 1, 1973, the critic Don McDonagh offered a condensed synopsis of the film. "Miss Jonas mixed straight line and circular movement in an open construction area along with a mirror flashing like a heliograph, clacking wooden blocks and the ambient sounds of passing ships' horns."[61] McDonagh's short description highlights several common threads in *Songdelay*. As in *Delay Delay*, performers holding lengths of pipe form pairs: one walks in a straight line and the other in a circle, linked together in a piston motion (in the beginning of the film, a circle and line are painted onto a cobblestone street; a design which is then walked by two performers). The various scenes in the film—the puppet-like figure moving rigidly with sticks in her clothes; a woman rolling a metal hoop across a field of rubble and then being rolled outstretched inside of it; a woman humming as she turns with a large metal rod resting on her shoulder—are punctuated with either clapping or mirror flashes. The film is roughly divided this way: the first half of the vignettes are montaged with shots of performers clapping in wide arcs along the piers; in the second half, this audio signal is replaced by a

[61] Don McDonagh, "Dance: Three Programs," *The New York Times* (June 4, 1973), 45.

visual one, as performers tilt mirrors to send flashes of sunlight toward the camera, at times completely saturating the celluloid and voiding the image (fig. 1.16).

For McDonagh, Jonas's "sun signals" brought to mind a specific device: the heliograph. A form of optical telegraphy akin to the semaphore invoked by Trisha Brown, the heliograph is a device that transmits coded messages though pulses of light caught by a titled mirror (fig. 1.17). This wireless solar telegraph was developed by the British Army for field operations in the late nineteenth century. Emerging nearly three decades after the invention of the electronic telegraph in the 1830s, heliography also transmitted messages via Morse code. While the use of mirrors to direct a beam of sunlight to distant points was invented around 1810 by Carl Friedrich Gauss, the telegraphic function of the heliograph was honed in 1869 by Henry C. Mance, who added a small lever that allowed the mirror to be easily titled to send flashes according to Morse code. This mode of signaling hinged on the movement of people through territories—logistics that contributed to and eventually would be replaced by increasingly sophisticated electronic infrastructures. Like the semaphore systems used by the US Signal Corps during the American Civil War, heliography was a military technique used primarily in Britain's colonies in India and Africa, where the ample sunlight fueled the ephemeral messages relayed on the go.

Jonas evoked the military role of the heliograph through a montaged sequence toward the end of *Songdelay* (fig. 1.18). Fifteen minutes into the film, a figure with a square piece of mirror in her hands appears on a sloping field of dirt mounds and flashes light toward the camera so that the celluloid is periodically saturated with light. The film jumps to a lone woman in an empty lot, captured by a telephoto lens. The figure with the

mirror is again on the hill, flashing light. She then disappears down the dirt slope, flares from her mirror still visible in the frame. The film is whited-out by a flash, forming a cut to the next scene, where a man stumbles across the mounds of dirt. He theatrically holds his side in apparent agony as if he has been shot or otherwise wounded, struggling, reeling, and falling into the soil. Another set of flashes form cuts—first to a flipped image of the distant woman pointing to the earth, and then back to the hill, where we see the heliographer scampering along the slope once more, sunlight blinking from her mirror. The mimed violence in the scene suggests a battlefield, hinting at the portrayals of certain sections of New York City in 1970s as "warzones" while also evoking the military function of heliographs. While the notion of the warzone was most often applied to the South Bronx, then imagined as a "wild and dangerous frontier," or, in the words of Martha Rosler, "a no-man's-land" or "urban desert," the neglected regions of lower Manhattan were similarly cast as frontiers and wastelands.[62] As Cortland Rankin has argued, there was a particular resonance between the "urban jungle" of the 1970s and the jungles of Vietnam.[63] "Looked like a warzone—like we dropped a bomb on ourselves," Jean-Michel Basquiat remarked as he roamed along the abandoned buildings and vacant lots of the Lower East Side in the film *Downtown 81*—an observation that could be

[62] Lydia Yee and Betti-Sue Hertz, *Urban Mythologies: The Bronx Represented Since the 1960s* (New York: The Bronx Museum of Art, 1999), 8. Quoted in Peter Thomas L'Official, "Urban Legends: The South Bronx in Representation and in Ruin," PhD diss, Harvard University, 2014. As much as the South Bronx existed in the "public imagination" as urban failure and frontier, L'Official writes, "of course it also existed as an environment that was characterized by ruined streets and buildings—one that was all to real to its residents" (2). Martha Rosler, "In the South Bronx of America," in Mel Rosenthal, *In the South Bronx of America*, 112. Quoted in L'Official, 3.

[63] Cortland Rankin, "Two Tales of a City: New York's Cinemas of Crisis and Reappropriation," PhD diss, New York University, 2016. Rankin reads cinematic depictions of New York City's parks in the 1970s and 1980s in the shadow of the Vietnam War, as "filmmakers imagine parks as wilderness spaces that resonate with the warzones of Southeast Asia" (115).

extended to the West Side a decade earlier as it was captured in *Songdelay*. Yet the rubble-filled area of downtown Manhattan filmed by Jonas is also clearly a work zone—"an open construction area," as McDonagh put it. The empty lot and the mounds of dirt where this scene takes place are the result of a process of urban decay, destruction, and renewal that also marked 1970s New York. As Jonas suggests through her intercutting of battlefield and building site with pulses of light, the heliograph was not only native to the arena of war, but also that of land appraisal and speculation.

If the heliograph is part of the genealogy of telegraphy linking data networks and warfare, its history also rooted in techniques of geodetic survey. Though the use of mirrors to relay messages has been dated as far back as Ancient Greece—a passage in Xenophon's *Hellenica* from 405 BCE, for instance, describes soldiers flashing their shields to communicate across a strait—there is a stronger historical link between the heliograph and the heliotrope: a device that also used a mirror to reflect sunlight over vast distances to mark the positions of participants in a land survey.[64] This was the original application of Gauss's design that preceded the invention of Morse code. Beginning in 1831, heliotropes were used by the British in the Great Trigonometric Survey of the Indian subcontinent, completed in 1871 (figs. 1.19-20). It was in India that the inventor of the heliograph thought to reorient the mirrored instrument as a signaling device, as heliotrope operators sometimes flashed a second, smaller mirror to communicate with survey stations, anticipating heliography as a form of optical telegraphy. ("It needs no second thought that they may be used as were the semaphores of Claude Chappé introduced in 1794 as the first efficient *telegraph*, but with greater effect," an American

[64] Xenophon's *Hellenica* is cited in Gerard J. Holzmann and Björn Pehrson, *The Early History of Data Networks* (Los Alamitos: IEEE Computer Society Press, 1995), 9.

civil engineer remarked in 1878.)[65] While regular survey targets became indistinct or invisible over intervening distances, flashing mirrors could be seen from hundreds of feet away, and were used to mark points that could be used to measure and map vaster distances. Heliotropes were used by land surveyors from the 1820s up until the 1970s, when the mirrored system was eclipsed by the development of a Global Positioning System.

In the early 1970s, Jonas made a videotape of land surveyors. She would later include this tape in an early version of her 1974 performance *Funnel*. Noël Carroll described this little-known component of the work in his review of the performance. "The first section of the piece is all video. The monitors click on. The image is black-and-white; a group of people are surveying land." For Carroll, the footage of land surveying "proposed the problem of distance." "That the subject matter of the piece is land surveying makes the illusion of depth an important issue," he wrote.[66] Taking the shape of a funnel that opened toward the audience, Jonas's set created a recessed space that brought the effects of distance indoors. This indoor "illusion of depth" was juxtaposed with flattened video images of the space recorded in real time. The exaggerated depth interacted with the flattening effect of the video images, some of which were also recorded in real time. Akin to the land surveyors, *Funnel* staked out physical and imagistic space—both "the problem of distance" and "the illusion of depth"—in juxtaposition with television's "annihilation of depth," as Doane put it. Jonas recalls that she videotaped the land surveyors during the construction of *Shift*: as Serra was laying out the dimensions for the sculpture, she recorded the surveyors as they staked out the

[65] L.M. Haupt, "On the Use of the Heliotrope in Geodetic Survey," *The Journal of the Franklin Institute* Vol. LXXVI (July – December 1878), 418.
[66] Noël Carroll, "Making the Image Visible," *Artforum* 12, no. 7 (April 1974), 52.

coordinates.[67] Though the videotape is no longer extant, stills from the video are reproduced in Krauss's essay on *Shift* (fig. 1.21). Jonas's invocation of land survey corresponds to her move to restore and plumb depth seemingly evacuated from televisual spectatorship. As the dual history of the sun signal as both a telecommunicative and geodetic technique reveals, the way that Jonas plotted distance was entangled with a larger process in which the teletechnologies that appear to bridge vast spaces rely on the militaristic control of space.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, heliotropes were put to use by the US Coast and Geographic Survey during the great land surveys of the Western United States. As was the case in British-occupied India, the double function of the heliograph/heliotrope as a device of military communications and land survey is inseparable from the context of colonialist expansion and control from which this particular teletechnology emerged. Somewhat unintentionally, the role of the heliograph in the history of the American West was evoked in a project by the British artist Ray Barrie surrounding this device in the early 1970s. Recalling the genesis of *Shift* as a mutual sighting between Jonas and Serra, Barrie first experimented the heliograph in Spain with his wife, Mary Kelly, in 1973.[68] As he made his way across a mountainside, Barry used the mirror to signal to Kelly, who caught the succession of flashes on film and signaled back once she had seen his signal. Later that year, the couple traveled to South Dakota where Barrie made another film of a heliograph. This time Kelly's brother signaled to Barrie from a mountain on the opposite side of the Oglala Basin. The 8mm film shows an edited succession of flashes in a mountainous desert landscape. After

[67] Jonas, in conversation with the author, May 8, 2017.
[68] All information regarding Barrie's heliograph project is from an email conversation, February 23-28, 2017, and a visit to the artist's studio in Los Angeles, March 28, 2017.

filming, the group visited the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation, where the Oglala Lakota and followers of the American Indian Movement seized Wounded Knee, the site of a massacre of indigenous people in 1890, in February 1973. There they clashed with the National Guard and FBI called in to suppress the uprising. Barrie later made a work pairing a medical diagram drawn on the wall inside a local Post Office that had been temporarily converted into a hospital to treat people injured in the crackdown with film stills of remote and urban landscapes. His heliographic film, meanwhile, was part of a proposal for a solar park that was never realized. Yet the adjacency of the heliographs and the oppression of American Indians by the American government is telling in the way that it conjures up the role of this optical telegraph in the mapping and control of land assumed to be "empty" because it was not yet occupied by white people. As the 1973 Wounded Knee incident attests, this history of domination continued to mediate the landscapes that had been recently staked out by land artists before Barrie and Kelly's arrival in the American West.

Upon their return from Japan in the early summer of 1970, Jonas and Serra made a trip to the Nevada desert to see Michael Heizer's recently completed *Double Negative* (1968-70). Their trip was documented by Philip Leider, the founding editor of *Artforum*, who drove with them from Berkeley to the site of Heizer's work: two thirty by fifty foot trenches dug into a sandstone mesa approximately eighty miles north of Las Vegas.[69] Leider described how the conversation in the car turned to politics. He and Serra discussed the revolutionary potential of art, with Abbie Hoffman's declaration that "the Vietcong attacking the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam is a work of art" as a litmus test (while

[69] Philip Leider, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation, or, Art and Politics in Nevada, Berkeley, San Francisco and Utah. *Artforum* 9, no. 1 (September 1970): 40-49. Reprinted on artforum.com, n.p.

Leider aligned himself with Michael Fried instead of Hoffman, neither was Serra "quite ready to absorb even elegant military actions into art").[70] When their car broke down outside Bakersfield, the trio walked over to a diner and encountered a parked truck carrying bombs. "We ate in the diner. When we came out, the bombs had left, off to Cambodia. Would they have gotten past Abbie Hoffman that easily?" The group made it to the site of *Double Negative* after sunset and "wound up slipping and sliding" inside its trenches. Leider noted that they went back to see the piece early the next morning, and Jonas made a videotape of it. Jonas's own outdoor works would engage televisual technology in a more expanded fashion as they engaged with a mediated landscape that destabilized received notions of here and there—the desert and the city; even Bakersfield and Cambodia.

Like performance, land art—in its vastness, its sitedness, its links to deeper geological cycles—has a fraught relationship to the technologies of reproduction that made the far-flung work visible to many viewers. "If it is not actually seen, it is photographed, reproduced, talked about, documented ad absurdum," the critic Dore Ashton observed in 1969.[71] Recent scholarship has underscored the constitutive role of media in the making, distribution, and experience of land art. Against the assumption that one can excise land art from "networks of media in photography, film, and television through which these artists operated,"[72] James Nisbet has shown how artists imagined "the planet as both a singular physical object and a systematic network."[73] As Nisbet

[70] Leider, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," n.p.
[71] Quoted in Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon, "Ends of the Earth and Back" in *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974* (Los Angeles and Munich: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Prestel, 2012), 27
[72] Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems,* 68.
[73] Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems,* 9.

argues, for many artists interested in ecology, matter was understood not to be simply inert but to possess a certain liveliness operating through energetic and informational pathways, so that the living earth was something both organic and mediated. The iconic image of the planet that graced the cover of Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog*, for instance, so key to the back-to-the-land movement, was made visible by government sponsored satellite technologies as an ATS-III televisual relay.[74] The "Land Art" episode of Gerry Schum's *Fernsehgalerie* ("television gallery") that aired in 1969 is another example of the transferal of "material and bodily engagement with earthly conditions into electronic information transmission."[75] As Tom Holert has written, Schum's approach to land art was not simply about publicity; rather, through his contextualization of the making and perception of earthworks vis-à-vis satellite and aerial imaging in his preface to the episode, Schum understood televisual exposure as bound up with new technologies for viewing the earth's surface that informed such work.[76]

Nancy Holt's Locators from the early 1970s are one such example of the way technologies of vision were incorporated into land art. Simple constructions consisting of a short length of pipe set at eye level on top of a longer upright pipe, these were sparse sculptures that doubled as telescopic devices. The Locators were originally installed in Holt's apartment so that they provided distant views of SoHo (aligning a Locator with the various empty lots taken over by Jonas, one could imagine watching vignettes from

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[74] Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems,* 71.
[75] Kaiser and Kwon, "Ends of the Earth and Back," 27.
[76] Tom Holert, "Land Art's Multiple Sites," in *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974,* 97-122. Holert points to a quotation from the introduction to the "Land Art" episode, where Schum states: "Through satellites it has become possible to experience the earth from extraterrestrial locations, be it directly or in photographic reproduction. A highway that we see from an airplane at 3,000 meters loses its purely functional character. It becomes primarily an artistic marking in the landscape" (qtd. on 102).

Delay Delay). In 1972, Holt positioned eight Locators in a field in Montana. *Missoula Ranch Locators: Vision Encompassed* was laid out in a ring with each tube aligned with one of the eight directional points of the compass. As they were aimed into the distance (or, alternatively, looked through the opposite end to survey the other Locators), the tubes had a telescopic effect by delineating the vast visual field into a condensed monocular view. As a tool for seeing at a distance, Holt's Locators invite the viewer to examine the space that would be collapsed by electronic televisual technologies—whether a sprawling cityscape or a vast ranch. Installed in both SoHo and Montana, the Locators also posited a continuity as they mediated these spaces. As Pamela Lee has written, Holt's Locators both channel vision and allow the observer to be observed. For Lee, Holt's submission of perception to rigors of a distanced observer—yielding an "observation of observations"—suggests that the artist considered her departure from the New York art world not as offering an escape but indicating a continuum of that social system of looking.[77]

Projects such as the Locators and the *Fernsehgalerie* invite a more expansive consideration of the ways that land itself—whether urban or rural, densely built or seemingly empty—is already mediated by technologies designed to survey and parcel the earth and communicate across it. As Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon have argued, this different approach to the question of mediation shifts the conversation from whether it is possible to represent a piece of land art in a different place to the contiguity between seemingly disparate sites. Though the American desert appears as the city's inverse, for instance, the effort to leave the city must be seen not in opposition but in relation to urban space: land art "is part of the complex processes of urban transformation and spatial

[77] Pamela M. Lee, "Art as a Social System: Nancy Holt and the Second-Order Observer," *Nancy Holt: Sightlines*, ed. Alena Williams (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 41.

politics of the period."[78] Against the notion that the desert is an empty space, Kaiser and Kwon write that "such attitudes reflect a denial of the presence and histories of indigenous cultures, as well as the fact that the desert was already cultivated, rationalized, militarized, even wasted as an extension of the urban grid before any artist arrived to make his or her mark in the 1960s."[79] The extension of the grid into the seeming emptiness of the desert points to what Bernard Siegert has identified as the distinctive property of the grid: its ability to colonize empty space.[80]

Different bodies of literature have developed around land art and contemporaneous site-specific interventions in Manhattan.[81] Yet there is a resemblance that hinges on the seeming emptiness of both the Western U.S. where most land art was installed and the decayed and demolished environs of downtown Manhattan of the 1970s. As Juan Suárez has written, the metropolitan setting of *Delay Delay* and *Songdelay* is evocative of the countryside that inspired Jonas: "It is an urban version of the mud flats at

[78] Kaiser and Kwon, "Ends of the Earth and Back," 21.
[79] Kaiser and Kwon, "Ends of the Earth and Back," 21. See Emily Eliza Scott, "Desert Ends," in *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974,* 67-85. Linking back to the military function of heliographs, in 1971 Dave Hickey compared land artists to soldiers: "'concerned with specific campaigns in specific sites, with logistics, ordnance and the burdens of command.' Their predilection for Jean, El Mirage, Massacre, and other wasted lakes was, in fact, connected to many aspects of these aberrant locations—including their reductive aesthetic, minimal legal regulation, vast scale, orientation to an aerial perspective, connotation with science fiction, and raw materiality" (quoted in Scott, 84).
[80] Bernhard Siegert, "The Grid, or Cultural Techniques of Ruling Spaces," in *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 97-120.
[81] Recent exhibitions are an indication: see *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974*, ed. Philipp Kaiser and Miwon Kwon (Los Angeles and Munich: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Prestel, 2012) versus *Mixed Use Manhattan: Photography and Related Practices,* ed. Lynne Cooke and Douglas Crimp, with Kristin Poor (Madrid and Cambridge: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and MIT Press, 2010).

Jones Beach or the Novia Scotia strand, or of the desert."[82] Recent writing on artistic interventions in SoHo by Suárez and others that stresses the city's *emptiness* forms a link with the apparent vacancy of the remote sites of land art. Yet, as Siegert has argued, the grid is precisely what mediates empty space, abstracts and parcels it through speculation. Just as she measured and marked the physical spaces supposedly overcome by electronic media, Jonas's engagement with the specific site of her performance in *Delay Delay* stakes out the spatiotemporal parameters of the grid as a technique of geographic control and abstraction.

Douglas Crimp, one of the original spectators who watched *Delay Delay* atop 319 Greenwich Street in 1972, has recently reflected on how, in retrospect, the expanse of vacant space visible from the rooftop now seems difficult to fathom. Remembering the stage of Jonas's performance means razing a large apartment complex and converting a manicured park to a patch of rubble—undoing the development of Lower Manhattan at the turn of the 1970s that caused the leveled landscape in the first place. As Crimp notes, the decimated topography that resulted from this spasm of redevelopment became fertile, if time-sensitive, ground for artistic experimentation. Ephemeral works by Jonas and her peers situated on the shifting grounds of New York City revealed, Crimp observes, "just how provisional was their availability for experimental uses."[83] Claimed and cleared under eminent domain, the vacancy of these spaces signified the contingency of investment. The land became a spatiotemporal interval subject to the movements of

[82] Juan A. Suárez, "Styles of Occupation: Manhattan in Experimental Film and Video from the 1970s to the Present," in *Mixed Use Manhattan: Photography and Related Practices,* 140.
[83] Douglas Crimp, "Action around the Edges," *Mixed Use Manhattan: Photography and Related Practices,* 125.

finance; a moment on the continuum of destruction and development that, as Henri Lefebvre has theorized, defines the "double process" of urbanization.[84]

Gordon Matta-Clark, who performed in *Delay Delay*, wrote of the "omnipresence of emptiness"[85] that appeared to govern Lower Manhattan at the time. As has been well documented, the abandoned cast-iron buildings of the South Houston Industrial District (now SoHo) attracted artists like Matta-Clark and Jonas who set up their studios in the cavernous lofts that formerly housed manufacturing operations. Artists occupied these buildings, as well, at first clandestinely and later legally, thanks to a zoning resolution passed in 1971 allowed visual artists to live where they worked. As Lee has observed, the artist ecosystem that thrived on collective spirit and fifty-cent gumbo at FOOD was also a monitored habitat. If SoHo at the turn of the 1970s was a "transitional space," it was also an "incubator" (the term applied to SoHo by the city planner and economic consultant hired to survey its prospects).[86] Lee suggests that the rezoning of the neighborhood as a residential district for artists was the product of the particular convergence of governmental and corporate interests that, as Themis Chronopoulos has elaborated, characterized the neoliberal administration of New York City that emerged in the 1970s, when bankers and politicians joined forces to reinvent the city as an investment opportunity.[87] Ostensibly left to their own devices in slum-like conditions, artists were in fact observed with a vested interest as they took to the deserted manufacturing area. The "communitarian sensibility" that burgeoned there signaled and contributed toward the

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[84] Quoted in Pamela M. Lee, *Object to be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 91.
[85] Quoted in Crimp, "Action around the Edges," 104.
[86] Lee, *Object to be Destroyed,* 95.
[87] Themis Chronopoulos, *Spatial Regulation in New York City: From Urban Renewal to Zero Tolerance* (Florence and New York: Routledge, 2012).

real estate value that would eventually invite the total gentrification and commercialization of the neighborhood.[88] Despite his reference to the "omnipresence of emptiness," Matta-Clark was no doubt attuned to the processes at work behind the appearance of vacancy. In 1973, for instance, he purchased scraps of uninhabitable "gutterspace" in Queens and Staten Island—such as a one foot by ninety feet sliver between buildings—orphaned by property lines. Lee writes that *Fake Estates* undercuts the totalizing rationality of the urban grid as "the very model of abstract space,"[89] but, by procuring its odd-shaped and unusable leftovers, Matta-Clark also extended its logic to colonize even the spaces it leaves empty.

The grid of lots annexed by *Delay Delay* was related to the construction of the new World Trade Center, with the newly completed Twin Towers visible to the south of the performance area.[90] If, as Lee writes, the towers, "symbolic…of private interests in the city," materialized as "Late Capital's newest and most profligate of monuments,"[91] the parallax view of *Delay Delay* showed the dilapidated inverse of these monumental

[88] Lee, *Object to be Destroyed,* 97-98.
[89] Lee, *Object to be Destroyed,* 99.
[90] Thirteen square blocks of low-rise buildings host to Radio Row—Lower Manhattan's electronics district—had been cleared to make way for the World Trade Center. In the mid-1960s, the Port Authority evoked eminent domain to displace hundreds of commercial and residential tenants and property owners in order to secure the "superblock" that would host seven buildings including the Twin Towers, which topped out by 1971 and were officially opened in 1973. Once the plan for the World Trade Center was secured in the mid-1960s, the Port Authority of New York was authorized to buy up the designated land from property owners in Radio Row for a flat-fee of 3,000 dollars per plot, regardless of the value of the company. In place of these small businesses and residences, the World Trade Center would offer subsidized office space leased by private tenants, who, in turn, would be subject to rising real estate taxes. Surrounding this complex (and contributing to the robust real estate taxes), additional land was cleared for the apartment buildings that now make up Tribeca. These maneuvers were enabled by the legal principle of eminent domain, but also by the structural principle of the urban grid. And it was the omnipresence of the grid, not emptiness as such, that was visible through the "omnipresence of emptiness."
[91] Lee, *Object to be Destroyed,* 109.

structures: the Hudson piers. In tandem with the West Side Elevated Highway, the piers constituted the horizon line of Jonas's tableau. Reiring sets the scene in her 1972 review of *Delay Delay*:

> There is an area on the west side of downtown Manhattan, north of the World Trade Center, that has remained vacant for more than two years. All buildings were leveled except for a few deemed historical landmarks. The land is allotted for "shoreline apartments and commercial complexes," but the construction process has been slow.[92]

Reiring's brief opening description highlights several significant features of the "vacated land" host to Jonas's performance. The lots that lay vacant for a number of years were the former grounds of the Washington Street Market, a multi-block open marketplace that catered to residents. As manufacturing jobs in the area decreased and the local population diminished, the market was deemed defunct and relocated to the Bronx. The land remained vacant for several years before the Battery City Apartments and an adjoining park were constructed. Though vacant at the time, the future use of this land had already been dictated by a confluence of rezoning and investment: as Reiring suggests, that fact that this land was already designated for "shoreline apartments and commercial complexes" was public knowledge.

Suárez has argued that in *Delay Delay*, and later *Songdelay*, "[t]his leveled-down plateau, the result of destruction, dedifferentiation, and sedimentation, evokes a clean slate on which community and connectivity might be reinvented through stripped-down motion and sound."[93] The very possibility of "reinvention" performed by Jonas and

[92] Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" 143.
[93] Suárez, "Styles of Occupation," 140.

others amidst the rubble of Lower Manhattan, however, was contingent on the larger process of "renewal" that was already underway. What Suárez views as a "clean slate" that facilitated artistic reinvention was also the provisional ground ultimately controlled by governmental forces—i.e. eminent domain—the ostensibly public function of which was, in New York City, in fact subject to private interests. Rather than "a clean slate," Reiring describes what was visible: "Unobscured by structures, the grid-like layout of New York City streets is apparent from the five-story height of the roof."[94] What appeared as blank space or an interval of emptiness between demolition and "renewal" is already mediated by a particular structure made visible by Jonas: the grid (figs. 1 and 2).

Siegert has anchored the genealogy of the grid as a cultural technique of the Renaissance that had both a representational function as the scaffolding of linear perspective and a topographical one as the basis of colonial settlement. The grid emerged as an imaging process with Alberti's *velum*, or diaphanous veil structured by warp and weft, which ordered the visual field so that each object occupied its own place in commensurate relationship with other visible objects. This role of the grid as an imaging process that hinged on placement extended to the framework of longitude and latitude that organized cartographic space, giving rise to topographical systems of standardized plots and the urban grid. Siegert describes the role of the grid in the American context as primarily one of land speculation: the "speculative grid" of townships plotted in the late eighteenth century, when "the very soil of the American continent became the object of a transfer system that facilitated the circulation of real estate."[95] The particular potency of

[94] Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" 144.
[95] Siegert, "The Grid," 114.

the grid, as Siegert's genealogy attests, is its ability to colonize empty space: it is "the basis of a mediatization of space from which hardly anything can escape."[96]

Here the stakes of occupying and measuring the particular terrain of *Delay Delay* come into focus as the seeming emptiness of New York City and the physical distances apparently overcome by teletechnologies are brought into relation. The urban grid is, after all, tied to the electrical grid in the "mediatization of space." As she added depth to the televisual image flattened by distance, marking the physical spaces traversed by teletechnologies, Jonas illuminated but also challenged the grid as a technique of abstraction. The urban grid served as the organizing principle of Jonas's "moving drawing," akin to Alberti's *velum*. At the same time, as performers physically occupied the grid, they mapped it as an inhabited power structure. Jonas's evocation of methods of both long-distance signaling and land survey allowed her to plumb the land supposedly collapsed by teletechnologies while engaging in its spatial politics. As Reiring describes, at one point in *Delay Delay* two performers physically occupied an intersection: a node of the urban grid. Here a couple painted a large circle and line (an activity glimpsed at the outset of *Songdelay*), which they then used as a map to walk with a pole between them in a piston motion. "Several cars entered the intersection," Reiring reports. "Because the couple did not stop their activity, the drivers had to deal with them and became part of the performance. Some drove around them; some backed up; some stopped and got out of their cars (including a policeman) to ask what they were doing."[97] Here Jonas added depth to the flattened and abstracted image in a different way: drawing out motorists as well as law enforcement from routine navigations.

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[96] Siegert, "The Grid," 102, 120.
[97] Reiring, "Joan Jonas's 'Delay Delay,'" 147.

Recalling the embodied techniques of signaling that inaugurated new modes of perception and presence at a distance, *Delay Delay* engaged the mediatization of the body as well as of space. On the one hand, Jonas's outdoor performances trained her audience to be receptive to long-distance signals: a corrective to the Tonkin Bay incident, for instance, or the assumption, raised in *Paul Revere*, that the British are necessarily coming to attack. On the other hand, the performance challenged the ability of her spectators to easily locate the other in space. At the outset of *Delay Delay*, performers alerted the audience to their positions by clapping, restoring depth to the flattened landscape. The performers were stationed by numbered signs that informed the perception of sound delay—a system that echoes Siegert's observation that, distributed by grid, "figures" take on both a pictorial and numerical valence.[98] Yet, as Crimp described, even at the outset, because of the overlapping sound from different distances and the interference of architectural elements such as the elevated Westside Highway, determining the position of the performers below was impaired. "In this very simple way," Crimp recounted, "Jonas enforced a separation between the spectator's senses of sight and hearing, making them aware of the contingency of perceptual experience."[99] By playing on delay as both a form of echolocation (sonic depth measurement) and dislocation (separation of sight and sound), Jonas both engaged and short-circuited the body's capacity for spatial location at a distance. Just as two satellites communicating to one another are necessary to determine the location of a third object, there is an exchange of information between our two eyes in order to determine the spatial position of an external object. When distance overcomes the capacity of binocular vision to process spatial information—as was the case in *Delay*

[98] Siegert, "The Grid," 103.
[99] Crimp, "De-Synchronization in Joan Jonas's Performances," *Scripts and Descriptions*, 8.

Delay, as well as the massive land surveys that required heliotrope stations—the ear is called into play. Implicating the body in the same basic process utilized by global positioning systems, Jonas foregrounded the physical distance both overcome and controlled by such systems while challenging her audience to locate others within it.

As Paul Virilio has written, the optical telegraphs that originated in warfare initiated a "technological development has carried us into a realm of factitious topology where all of the surfaces of the globe are directly present to one another." From this vantage point, Vietnam as the first "television war" did not just shockingly collapse space to deliver images of far off conflict, it referred to a continuity: the longstanding mediatization of space that ensures its penetrability by technologies of observation and destruction that, as Virilio has shown, have developed in tandem.[100] In contrast to artists such as Martha Rosler and Yvonne Rainer who responded to the televisual representation of the Vietnam War in the American public sphere through images, Jonas's long-distance performances illuminate the longstanding imbrication of telecommunications and defense technology: the electronic conduits through which the Vietnam War was not only represented, but unfolded.[101] So while the tele-performances by Jonas and her peers insist on distance, they also illuminate the *continuity* of the mediated landscape that underlies apparent divides: between city blocks and the battlefield, or the surveyor's grid and infrastructures of signal traffic. With flashes, waves, and claps, Jonas remapped the

[100] Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema* (1984), trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 2009), 68

[101] See Carrie Lambert Beatty's discussion of the spectatorial investigations of Rainer and Rosler in relation to the televisual mediation of the Vietnam War in *Being Watched*, 143-164. Richard Serra and Carl Andre responded to the war in a similar fashion in their joint contribution to the 1970 Tokyo Biennale that consisted of a poster reproducing a news image from the battlefield with the text "The Pig Will Eat Its Children."

technologized intervals ostensibly collapsed by telecommunications as overlooked domains for relating to one another, even if always at a distance.

Body Signals

The role of the body as a signaling mechanism is not simply an outmoded teletechnology, where handheld flags and mirrors have been surpassed by electronic signal. We signal to one another in every interaction, communicating information encoded in our bodies that exceeds spoken language. If Jonas and Serra's film *Paul Revere* evoked the military roots of television in optical telegraphy, it also tethered telecommunication to the intimate sphere of body language. The artists appropriated the script for their film from *Kinesics in Context*, an anthropological text published by Ray Birdwhistell in 1970. "Kinesics" is the study of "body motion communication": non-verbal exchanges of information made up of cultural repertoires of corporeal signals. Birdwhistell describes the human communication system as a series of "channels" that cross-reference one another, akin to the hypothetical additions to Revere's lanterns to bolster the clarity of the message. While spoken language, or the auditory channel, has been privileged, there are other sensory channels (visual, tactile, etc.) at play in the transmission and reception of information in any given exchange. The particular passage chosen by Jonas and Serra has the effect of layering corporeal technique and teletechnology: suggesting that even our most intimate encounters are mediated by codes akin to long-distance signals. "Interpersonal relations gradually became redescribed in the technical terms of transmission at a distance," Peters writes "—making contact,

tuning in and out, being on the same wavelength, getting good or bad vibes."[102] Even when we are in bodily range of one another, we may be telepresent.

In *Paul Revere*, if contingencies of human error and psychosis—the reckless teenagers, the anxious farmers—introduce noise into communication systems, threatening the clarity of the signal, more intricate and pervasive systems of codes also inhere in our behavior. As the film stresses, ultimately, the correct functioning of a communication system depends on the "proper internalization" of its signals. This is true of any community: communicants must effectively internalize its codes to be legible to one another. If the example of Paul Revere's signaling church light is "multiplied astronomically, we gain some insight into the task faced by a child in becoming a sane member of his society." Though humans are imagined to threaten the integrity of the signal—a concept based on Claude Shannon's model of communication as the transmission and reception of signal—as the film also suggests, the body has a significant history as a signaling technology that was revived in the early 1970s.

Birdwhistell's book piqued the interest of a number of other artists involved with performance, including Richard Schechner of The Performance Group, Yvonne Rainer and Steve Paxton of Grand Union, and directors Robert Wilson and Richard Foreman.[103] According to a 1973 article on kinesics by Schechner published in *TDR*, Birdwhistell's theories about body motion communication also offered tools to artists, directors, actors to craft channels of movement and behavior outside of the lines of verbal communication

[102] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air*, 5. "Interpersonal relations gradually became redescribed in the technical terms of transmission at a distance—making contact, tuning in and out, being on the same wavelength, getting good or bad vibes, of 'Earth to Herbert, come in please!'"

[103] Daniel N. Stern with Richard Schechner, "'On Kinetic Analysis': A Conversation with Daniel N. Stern," *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 17. No. 3 (September 1973), 121-122.

and to approach codes of movement and behavior as culturally conditioned and therefore mutable:

> The factors being examined in performance are gesture, posture, groupings, and constellations of groupings; these are looked at not abstractly but as infra-communications channels. These channels, according to Birdwhistell, are not species-specific, but cultural […] motor, sensory, linguistic patterns (codes) are learned, they are not innate. In other words, artists are experimenting with symbols and codes because there are no changeless patterns of these.[104]

Rather than expressing some natural significance, body signals, like telegraphic code, are arbitrary: a gesture in one culture may mean something entirely different in another. In this sense kinesics anticipated Judith Butler's theory of the performativity of gender, where gender identity is understood as an effect of the repetition of stylized gestures rather than the expression of inborn qualities.[105] This offered experimental potential: as Schechner suggests, the role of cross-referencing (with other bodily channels and signals) and context underscored by kinesics enabled the dissociation of movements from normal cross-references and quotidian contexts to liberate new meanings.

Kinesics researchers often used film and eventually mainly video to analyze body motion communication,[106] another crossover with artists working with integrating media technologies and performance. As Birdwhistell wrote, "[t]he movie camera, when used together with the slow-motion analyzer, makes possible observation and analysis of

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[104] Richard Schechner and Cynthia Mintz, "Kinesics and Performance," *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (September 1973), 105.
[105] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[106] Stern with Schechner, "'On Kinetic Analysis,'" 120-121.

human social behavior which has hitherto been hidden from comparative analysis."[107] In a 1973 interview with Schechner, psychoanalyst, doctor, and "kinesic researcher" Daniel N. Stern points to Rainer and Paxton's interest in this aspect of the study of body motion communication. "When Yvonne and Steve came into the lab I felt that we were struggling with the same problems, trying to understand what a behavioral sequence was all about," Stern recounted. "I was fascinated by some of the time distortions that they used in some of their dances—where, for instance, they slow things down very much, or even hold things, which is exactly what I found necessary to do with film in order to see what was really happening."[108] Schechner mentioned his plan for Stern to work with The Performance Group: "performers will assist in a kinesic analysis of their own behavior as reflected in rehearsals and performances. The 'kines' thus isolated will be fed back into rehearsals, re-analyzed, and so on."[109] Presumably, this exercise would be enabled by the ability for performers to watch themselves onscreen. Through the lens of kinesics, what is made visible through film or video is another layer of mediation: the body as a transmitter of cultural codes.

Jonas and Serra's decision to make a film about Paul Revere's signaling tower points to the genealogy of electronic telecommunications in forms of human signaling that also anticipate kinesics, positing a link between expansive spaces of signal traffic and the bodily register of the human perceptual apparatus that both Jonas's and Serra's outdoor works engage. The human body has been understood to threaten information, to jam perfect transmission and obstruct ethereal electronic communion. Yet viewed from

[107] Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics in Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 50.
[108] Stern with Schechner, "'On Kinetic Analysis,'" 121-122.
[109] Schechner and Mintz, Kinesics and Performance," 106. See also Stern with Schechner, "'On Kinetic Analysis,'" 121.

both intimate and geopolitical standpoints—up close and at a distance—it appears as a signaling device in both interpersonal relations and systems of telecommunication. Linked on the one hand to television and on the other hand to the minutia of kinesic analysis, video mediated between these scales.

In 1974, Vito Acconci would articulate the new scale of distances accessed by video through "proxemics," an anthropological concept related to kinesics. In "Some Notes on My Use of Video," a statement published in *Art-Rite* in 1974, Acconci characterized video as a new kind of "[f]ace-to-face contact."[110] Acconci contrasts the proximal video viewer to the distanced film spectator. With "a screen approximately face-size," video invites the viewer into a cozy proximity, where "person onscreen faces person in front of screen." "Video-viewer sits close to the screen," Acconci wrote "—the distance Edward Hall calls 'personal distance,' where three-dimensionality is emphasized. But the image on video is flat, grainy—video, then serves to decrease distance, to approach Hall's 'intimate distance,' where vision is blurred and distorted (appropriately, the video image presents itself in dots)."[111] The face-size screen of the video monitor or television set not only gives a sense of a face-to-face encounter; it beckons the viewer even closer so that the dots of the raster image become visible, the screen porous. As visibility dissipates, the interface itself becomes something bodily: it is not only transparent, but permeable.

Acconci drew the concept of "intimate distance" from *The Hidden Dimension*, 1966 book by the cultural anthropologist Edward Hall on "proxemics," or the study of personal and social space. Like Birdwhistell's kinesics, proxemics is a category in the

[110] Vito Acconci, "Some Notes on My Use of Video," *Art-Rite* no.7 (Autumn 1974), 2.
[111] Acconci, "Some Notes on My Use of Video," 2.

anthropological study of nonverbal communication (Schechner also cites Hall in his discussion of kinesics).[112] While kinesics pertains to body language, proxemics concerns the "language of space" in human and animal interaction. Acconci referred to Hall's analysis of "distances in man": the "series of expanding and contracting fields which provide information of many kinds" that Hall categorized as "intimate distance," "personal distance," "social distance," and "public distance."[113] While Acconci initially likened video to personal distance—the bubble we maintain between one another in typical social interactions—he goes on to align the technology with intimate distance. As Hall defines it, this "is the distance of lovemaking and wrestling," where "the cross-eyed pull of the eye muscles provide a visual experience that cannot be confused with any other distance."[114] As bodies entangle, this is the negotiation of the slightest of spaces. "Sight (often distorted), olfaction, heat from the other person's body, sound, smell, and feel of the breath all combine to signal unmistakable involvement with another body," Hall writes.[115] By linking video with this "unmistakable involvement with another body," Acconci suggested that even the closest distance between people is not a reserve of unmediated experience as a new technology of presence redefines intimacy.

Acconci plumbed intimate distance in his 1973 video *Theme Song*. (Images and text from this video are printed alongside his notes on video in *Art-Rite*). "Like a quiet, private night," Acconci wrote, setting the scene, "pillows on a living room floor."[116] In the video, Acconci appears to recline on just the other side of the screen. Lying on his side, he looks directly out at the viewer. He lights a cigarette and switches on a tape

[112] Schechner and Mintz, "Kinesics and Performance," 104.
[113] Edward Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 115.
[114] Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, 117.
[115] Hall, *The Hidden Dimension,* 116.
[116] Acconci, "Theme Song" (1973) in "Some Notes on My Use of Video," 3.

player, lowly singing along with Jim Morrison between drags: "I can't see your face in my mind." "Oh of course I can't see your face, I have no idea what your face looks like," Acconci mutters over the music. "You could be anybody out there. Ah but I know there's gotta be somebody. There's gotta be somebody watching me," Acconci's voice drops to a seductive whisper: "There's gotta be somebody who wants to come in close to me. Look, look…I can just wrap myself around," he says, slowly swinging his legs into view. "I mean don't you want to come in here? Sure, sure you'll come in here eh?" Acconci proceeds to seduce and manipulate the viewer from inside the monitor, inviting us to climb into his sphere of intimate distance.

In 1974, Douglas Davis echoed the videotaped seduction of Acconci's *Theme Song*, expanding it to the scale of television. Davis made a series of videos for broadcast TV in which he directly addressed the audience, asking the unknown viewers, for instance: "Please come to the set and place your lips against it. Think about our lips meeting now."[117] As Davis later wrote, this project stemmed from what he understood to be the revolutionary potential of video: "the incalculable power of video not only to disseminate eye to eye, mind to mind, but to do so in real, organic time—the time of the sender and the if the receiver can be the same."[118] As Davis implies, televisual immediacy allowed for new possibilities of intimacy at a distance: "think about our lips meeting now."[119] Yet this meeting was also always a separation, an irreducible distance within the new "face-to-face contact" enabled by video.

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[117] Ann-Sargent Wooster, "Reach Out and Touch Someone: The Romance of Interactivity," in *Illuminating Video*, 283.
[118] Douglas Davis, "Video in the mid-70s: Prelude to an End/Future," in *Video Art: An Anthology*, ed. Korot and Schneider, 197.
[119] Wooster, "Reach Out," 284. As Wooster points out, however: "Although calling for intimacy and interactivity, Davis's projects underline the isolation and limitation of

At the time she performed *Delay Delay* in 1972, Jonas had been experimenting with the video equipment she acquired in Japan out of the public eye. In the privacy of her SoHo loft, Jonas would sit in front of the closed-circuit camera, using the monitor as a mirror as she performed simple actions with various personal objects and donned different costumes. She acquired a semi-translucent plastic mask from a shop on 42nd Street ("a place where pornographic objects are sold to be used as erotic turn ons") as part of these explorations.[120] As she played with her masked face in the "face-sized" video monitor, Jonas engaged the erotic nature of video's intimate distance articulated by Acconci. Accordingly, as a piece of erotic paraphernalia, her mask was designed for "the distance of lovemaking." Seductively transparent, the mask was of mediation inhering in the such an intimate interaction as it was designed to be worn during sex. Yet this mask was also presumably a tool for role-playing. Organic Honey's mask is a distancing device in that, like all masks, it inserts distance between the performer and her performed identity, so that there is a dislocation between the self and the presence on stage. In wearing this mask along with other accouterments and guises, Jonas also added a different implication to intimate distance. If Acconci and Davis were primarily concerned with the erotics of the seemingly immediate encounter between artist and spectator even at a distance, Jonas explored importing distance into the intimate confines of her psyche. The mask spaced herself from herself, enabling her to be self and other, present and absent, all in the same mediated moment.

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intimacy the electronic interface imposes." "What is ahead," Davis wrote in 1976, "—what is already apparent in the first television generation of the United States—is a more diversified, fragmented, and self-rooted society, not the tribal village dreamed of in McLuhan's prophecies." Davis, "Video in the mid-1970s," 199.

[120] Joan Jonas in Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed., (Milan: Skira Editore, 2000), 123.

In 1972, the masked act that Jonas developed in private alongside her outdoor pieces would become her first performance to actively incorporate video: *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. Taking place indoors, this was the first public performance surrounding Jonas's "TV persona" Organic Honey. This piece, which was more explicitly staked on the gendered dynamics of communication and identity illuminated by kinesics, would lead Jonas to another angle of early teletechnologies that is inseparable from questions of female subjectivity and embodiment: the phenomenon of telepathy that arose alongside other forms of telecommunication in the late nineteenth century. For, long before the advent of video, as one historian has noted, telepathy likewise "theorizes intimate distance."[121]

[121] Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

"*Fort:Da*, *tele*pathy against tele*pathy*, distance against menacing immediacy, but also the opposite, feeling (always close to oneself, it is thought), against the suffering of distancing that would also be called telepathy."

– Jacques Derrida[1]

You hurry down Wooster Street on a moonless night in February. Passing through a cloud of cigarette smoke surrounding a door at the corner of Broome, you enter an expansive space sparsely lit by track lights and a few bare bulbs. A blank video monitor confronts you from center of the room, about twenty feet from the door. Behind and to the right of the monitor is a video camera on a tripod beside a table covered with a quilt and an array of objects. There is a projector aimed at the back left wall of the room and a second monitor that faces away from the audience now assembling. You take a seat on the floor as two women roll a large mirror mounted on wheels into the space. As the mirror rattles past, you meet the gaze of a friend standing at the back of the room, look away from your own smiling face.

There is an apparition beside the table laid with props: one minute it is Joan Jonas, the next minute it is not—or not quite (fig. 2.1). Jonas puts on a cheap plastic mask—the kind you can get at a sex shop in Times Square. The face has the permanent sweetness of a doll: rounded cheeks airbrushed with rouge; arched, expectant eyebrows; lips parted in a playful smile. Jonas peers through bedroom-eye holes rimmed with kohl. Lifting the camera off its tripod, Babette Mangolte begins to record this figure as she sings and dresses in a sequined jacket and pink-feathered headdress. The circuit of video equipment

[1] Jacques Derrida, "Telepathy" (1981), trans. Nicholas Royle, *Oxford Literary Review* 10 (1988), 36.

comes to life. The monitors glow. An eight-by-twelve image is projected onto the back left wall. The preening presence is multiplied in gray scale, the light trailing from her soft shellacked features. The room is charged with her. Switching on an electric fan that tosses her long hair, she plays to the camera, using the monitor that faces her to frame her image as it is broadcast to the intimate audience (fig. 2.2).

Over the course of an hour, a series of female presences appear and interact in a series of vignettes that unfold both onscreen and off, tempting your eyes in different directions. Following her initial act of costuming, Jonas rips a piece of paper off of the wall behind her, revealing a Japanese print of a woman's face. She gazes at her masked face in a small mirror. As she tilts the mirror to look at herself, it reflects light onto the image of the Japanese woman, spotlighting her (fig. 2.3). Jonas then sits down at the table beside a large jug of water. Peering into the jug, she attempts the carnival game of dropping pennies into a submerged shot glass. As she drops the pennies one by one, the camera shows a close-up of the jar with the coins slicing through the shimmering water, the masked face just visible through the aqueous video image (fig. 2.4). Another performer enters wearing an identical mask as Jonas. The two women slide onto the floor together. As Mangolte hovers over them with her camera, the video image reveals them touching and kissing one another's plastic faces, rolling in and out of the frame. The women continue with their enigmatic activities for and with one another and the camera: drawing, whispering, fanning, swaying, howling, laughing, masking and unmasking. They are ambiguous presences: automaton-like, apparitional, mediated.

Joan Jonas's *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* took place at the LoGiudice Gallery in February of 1972. It was the first of a series of performances Jonas made

between 1972 and 1974 that staged the video apparatus, with the camera, monitor, and projection linked in a closed-circuit loop.[2] Jonas's first "video performances" overlapped with her outdoor pieces that enacted a form of television—or seeing at a distance—across beaches, college campuses, and city blocks. In Jonas's subsequent indoor pieces performed in lofts and galleries, a sense of intimate distance was manifested through the video equipment. The closed-circuit apparatus at once separated the audience from the performance and gave them access to it, as spectators viewed Jonas via a monitor and/or projection while she related to them indirectly by looking into the camera.

Jonas's initial video performances featured "Organic Honey," whom the artist variously referred to as her "TV persona," "alter ego," and "my opposite and a stranger" (fig. 2.5). Variously dressed in a sequined bed jacket, satin kimono, sequined belly-dancer's outfit, silk turban, or a showgirl's headdress, Organic Honey is primarily recognizable by her face: a semi-translucent mask that Jonas bought on 42nd Street from "a place where pornographic objects are sold to be used as erotic turn ons."[3] Despite her fixed visage with its permanent sugary grin, Organic Honey never stabilized into a particular personality. In turn, her appearance was distributed across four different women wearing identical masks: Jonas along with Suzanne Harris, Kate Parker, and Linda Patton (fig. 2.6). As Jonas later noted in her journal, "we move through many different identities and states of being / the floozie, the sorceress and finally / the

[2] The video and performance *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* would later branch into two related pieces in the series: *Vertical Roll*, a video made during a rehearsal for *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* that was marked by a rolling horizontal bar, and *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, a performance with closed-circuit video displayed on a monitor with this image disturbance.

[3] Joan Jonas in Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed., (Milan: Skira Editore, 2000), 123

chanteuse howling like a dog into the microphone."[4] Likewise, as she told Carla Liss and Simone Forti in 1973, Organic Honey "played different roles: the sorceress, the seducer, the narcissistic child."[5] These feminine "identities and states of being" would emerge and dissipate over the course of the performance—revealed, amplified, and fragmented by video, but never captured by it.

Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy germinated as a private ritual for the video camera: Jonas sitting in front of her new portapak, showing objects to the camera and regarding herself in the monitor in real time. "I sat on a white wicker chair facing the camera and monitor, and using props, objects, and sound, I improvised for the camera."[6] She saw the monitor as an "ongoing mirror," one whose electronic fluidity corresponded to a stream of shifting of identities.[7] "Self portrait in transition," she jotted in her notes for the project.[8] As Jonas translated her private explorations of feminine identity before the camera into a sequence of rehearsed tableaux for an audience, she retained the video equipment as a vital component of the performance.[9] In the very first iteration of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, the performers handled the video camera; later, Babette Mangolte served as a designated camerawoman. As Mangolte moved around the

[4] Joan Jonas Archive. Notebook c. late 1970s.
[5] Quoted in "Show Me Your Dances…Joan Jonas and Simone Forti with Carla Liss," *Art and Artists*, Vol. 8, No. 7, Issue 91 (October 1973), 15.
[6] Joan Jonas, "Transmission," in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 123.
[7] "Joan Jonas," in *The New Television: A Public/Private Art,* ed. Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), 71.
[8] Jonas Archive (Notebook 15, c. 1972-1974).
[9] Following her initial experiments with the portapak in the privacy of her studio, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* began as a demonstration for a small audience of Sol LeWitt and his students at 112 Greene Street before Jonas developed the piece for a more public audience. Joan Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 145. "At 112 I wasn't doing a performance for the public but was using the place to make a video, which I thought of as performing the image making," Jonas has said. "I invited Sol LeWitt and his class to be an audience."

performers to record their actions, different video images were projected on the back wall of the performance area and shown on a monitor (which also played prerecorded videos). A second monitor faced inward so the performers were also able to view themselves.

In the Organic Honey series, only women were given the power to wield the video camera. This move resonated with the role of video as a tool of self-representation and consciousness-raising in the women's liberation movement. "In this moment," Melinda Barlow has written, "the low cost, instantaneous transmission, and sense of intimacy offered by the medium seemed to forecast a revolution in image-making; access was of paramount importance, and controlling the technology was, for women, tremendously empowering."[10] Yet, as Pamela Lee has argued, Jonas's Organic Honey series departed from the values of immediacy and democratic possibility ascribed to video as key to women's self-representation. Rather than transparently presenting the female body as such, Lee writes, Jonas would use video to question that body's "seeming capacity to communicate in an unmediated fashion."[11] The very ability to reveal the body as thoroughly *mediated*—"abstracted, parsed, regulated, and controlled"—was key to the feminist potential of video as it was engaged through performance by Jonas and others, including Carolee Schneemann and VALIE EXPORT. In works by these artists, Lee writes, women's "bodies themselves took on the status of media."[12]

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[10] Melinda Barlow, "Feminism 101," *Camera Obscura* 54, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2003), 7. In her introduction to *The 1976 New York Women's Video Festival* catalog, video artist, curator, and teacher Susan Milano remarked that "portable video and the women's movement sprang up together." As Barlow later remarked, it is no coincidence that the first Women's Video Festival, founded by Steina Vasulka and eventually coordinated by Milano until 1980, occurred in 1972 (the year Jonas first publicly performed as Organic Honey)—a watershed year for the women's liberation movement. See Barlow, 3, 8.
[11] Pamela M. Lee, "Bare Lives," in *X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s* (Köln: Walther König, 2004), 82.
[12] Lee, "Bare Lives," 70.

Jonas seems to have anticipated Lee's insight when, in 1980, she wrote: "The performer sees herself as a medium: information passes through."[13] While Lee refers to bodies as media, however, Jonas's characterization of the performer as a medium has a paranormal tone that resonates with her invocation of "telepathy" in the title of her first video performance. Bearing associations of automatism and passivity ("information passes through"), the medium may seem like an odd figure to invoke at the close of the decade that saw the resurgence of the feminist movement in America. Yet, in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, the work Jonas most directly associated with the women's liberation movement, the artist staged the ambiguous feminist possibilities of the medium as a subject who is not fully present to herself or to others.[14]

Jonas has since remarked that she believes in telepathy.[15] Whether or not it can be proven to exist, telepathy, defined as the transmission of thoughts, mental images,

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[13] Joan Jonas, "Closing Statement," *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions 1968-1982*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley and Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 139.

[14] Jonas has stressed the women's liberation movement as a significant context for the Organic Honey series. "[T]he movement affected my work quite profoundly, she told Liss and Forti in 1973, for instance. "My work had always been about releasing images and tensions from my psyche, within the framework of structure and a perception of space. But the movement helped me in asserting and understanding my individual female content." "Show Me Your Dances…Joan Jonas and Simone Forti with Carla Liss," 15. See also her later text, "Transmission," 126-127 for the role of video in the feminist movement of the early 1970s. "In general, video became a vehicle for women's voices … We could speak to the camera, record our movements, communicate our desires. I explored the possibilities of female imagery, questions of whether there is a female psyche, and representations of emotions … Video as we used it was personal, and the personal was political."

[15] Jonas, in conversation with the author, May 8, 2017. See also Joan Jonas, in a 2003 interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, in *Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews: Volume 2*, ed. Charles Arsène-Henry, Shumon Basar, and Karen Marta (Milan: Charta, 2010), 395. As Jonas told Obrist, "I definitely believe in telepathy. I was always interested in people doing experiments like reading minds and so on, and I have always been interested in the idea of magic shows and fortune-tellers. I used to like to have my fortune told. For a while there, I was having my fortune told all the time."

feelings, sensations, and the like from one mind to another through paranormal means, has been marginalized in Western culture as the stuff of occult nonsense and science fiction.[16] Perhaps relatedly, Jonas's reference to telepathy has barely been touched in the critical reception of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. Scholars have instead focused on how Jonas appears to critique essentialized notions of gender identity espoused by second wave feminism by performing femininity as a masquerade.[17] What has been neglected in this account is how Jonas, at the same moment that feminist critics like Mary Ann Doane were rejecting inborn qualities as the basis for feminine identity in the early 1980s, summoned the performance paradigm of mediumship rather than that of masquerade or drag.[18] A historically feminine figure who also troubles fixed notions of gender and sexuality, the medium may be seen as a hinge between the counterculture communalism of the 1960s and the politics of identity often dated to the 1980s. For if telepathy is essentially connective, overcoming the distance between bodies and minds, it is also profoundly dissociative, injecting distance into self-presence that makes room for others.

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[16] "Telepathy," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[17] The first to argue this using Mary Ann Doane's theory of female masquerade was Kathy O'Dell in "Performance, Video, and Trouble in the Home," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in association with the Bay Area Video Collective, 1990), 135-151. Subsequent writing on the Organic Honey series has elaborated O'Dell's point. See Chrissie Iles, "Reflective Spaces: Film and Video in the Work of Joan Jonas" and Andrea Jahn, "The Encounter with the Gaze Behind the Mask," in *Joan Jonas: Performance Video Installation 1968-2000*, ed. Johann-Karl Schmidt (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 144-163 and 48-67; Johanna Burton, "The Strings of the Human Spirit: Joan Jonas's Asymmetrical Symbolic," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 172-179.

[18] As Doane argued in 1982, the "masquerade, in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance." Rather than "presence-to-itself"—where one's image as a woman coincides seamlessly with an inborn quality of womanliness—femininity is shown to be "a mask that can be worn or removed." Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator" (1982), in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 25.

Collective Consciousness

In 1969, Robert Barry sat in Seth Siegelaub's apartment in New York on a long-distance telephone call to Canada. He began to concentrate inwardly: his message was not verbal, but telepathic. After visiting the Institute of Telepathy on 57th Street, Barry devised *Telepathic Piece*, which was included in an exhibition in Vancouver organized by Siegelaub (fig. 2.7). "During the Exhibition I will try to communicate telepathically a work of art, the nature of which is a series of thoughts that are not applicable to language or image," Barry proposed. At one point during the show, Siegelaub arranged a phone hook-up to the gallery in Canada to facilitate Barry's piece. As Barry recalls, he responded to several questions by channeling whatever it was he was thinking and feeling at the time: a mental transmission that is potentially still hanging in the ether.[19]

In his 1971 piece *Connecting Medium*, Vito Acconci stood in front of a curtained wall inside a television studio in New York (fig. 2.8). Across from him was a man with a video camera. Acconci put in earplugs, directing his gaze away from the camera. The cameraperson then began to record Acconci, giving him directions to move around the stage. Acconci's aim was to perceive the man's instructions through extrasensory means. "I concentrate on receiving his directions; he concentrates on transmitting his directions. All our attention, on either side of the camera, is focused on the message."[20] Since Acconci could not hear him, the cameraperson had to marshal his powers of concentration to communicate his intention to Acconci, often repeating his directives

[19] Robert Barry, interview with Raimundas Malasauskas. http://community.livejournal.com/-arthistory/33358.html

[20] Vito Acconci, "Connecting Medium, Mar 1971," in *Vito Acconci: Diary of a Body, 1969-1973*, ed. Vito Acconci, Sarina Basta, and Garrett Ricciardi (Milan: Charta, 2006), 254.

until Acconci seemed to grasp them and sometimes simply giving up as the artist veered off course.

Connecting Medium was one of what Acconci called his "quasi-ESP experiments" of the early 1970s, designed to engage intuition, concentration, and "sixth sense" between two people, as performers were proximal to one another yet distanced enough to elicit extra-sensory modes of perception and awareness.[21] Like Barry's *Telepathic Piece,* which was premised on the transmission of pure thought from the artist to the receiver without the use of language or pictures, it is a work that merges conceptual art with the possibilities of parapsychology. Yet even as *Connecting Medium* and *Telepathic Piece* did away with the mediating vehicles of word or image, neither work was without mediation. In *Telepathic Piece*, telepathy was aided by the telephone. In *Connecting Medium*, ESP was linked with video. Whether in two different countries or on opposite sides of the same room, telepathy's ability to traverse the distances between individual minds appeared to dovetail with the properties of electronic media, which similarly posited instantaneous transmission at a distance as the condition of a new relationality.

As Barry's *Telepathic Piece* and Acconci's *Connecting Medium* suggest, the instantaneous transmission enabled by electronic media, increasingly part of everyday life by the close of the 1960s, conjured notions of telepathic connection. As Pamela Thurschwell has observed, both telepathy and electricity "inspire fantasies of community

[21] See description of *Association Area*, Electronic Arts Intermix. The performance elements for *Channel* (1971), for instance, are listed as: "earplugs, concentration, 'sixth sense,' directions," while *Association* (1971) includes "blindfolds, earplugs, concentration, intuition, and movement" in addition to videotape. In *Channel,* two performers with earplugs and microphones attempt to direct one another through "sixth sense," while in *Association Area*, two performers attempt to imitate one another through intuition. "Channel, Feb 1971" and "Association Area, Feb 1971," in *Diary of a Body,* 236, 246.

— instant access to others. If the world becomes a smaller place because of telecommunication, telepathy too is imagined to create connections with even more startling potential effects."[22] In a 1969 interview with *Playboy*, Marshall McLuhan connected the telepathic potential of psychedelic drugs (taken up by the likes of William S. Burroughs and the Grateful Dead, for instance) with electronic media. "Drug taking is stimulated by today's pervasive environment of instant information, with its feedback mechanism of the inner trip. The inner trip is not the sole prerogative of the LSD traveler; it's the universal experience of TV watchers," McLuhan remarked.[23] He went on to say that the increasingly networked globe would become "a world of ESP." As McLuhan stated, "the new society will be one of mythic integration, a resonating world akin to the old tribal echo chamber where magic will live again: a world of ESP. The current interest of youth in astrology, clairvoyance and the occult is no coincidence." "Are you talking about global telepathy?" asked the interviewer. "Precisely," McLuhan replied.[24]

As televisual technology became increasingly available to artists at the turn of the 1970s, McLuhan's notion of a "world of ESP" migrated from the pages of *Playboy* to *Radical Software.* In this magazine devoted to video art, contributors addressed the shared body-extending and distance-annihilating possibilities of electronic media and telepathy couched in McLuhan's rhetoric. In his 1972 article "Telepa-Vision," Tom Bender lamented the inability of human language to keep pace with the possibilities of communication through electronic technologies. Only if we could "tap into mental images and communicate them," then "the ability to communicate directly and effectively

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[22] Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology, and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25.
[23] Marshall McLuhan in "Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan," *Playboy* (1969), 66.
[24] McLuhan, "Playboy Interview," 72.

between minds" would "begin opening the pathway towards integrating man into an operative super-organism." This cohesive "super-organism" was modeled on the flow of information networks. "The telepathetic link up of our mends [minds] can begin to move our information handling capacities by several orders of magnitude toward the theoretical potentials promised by information theory."[25] In 1976, Lynn Hershman echoed the notion of "telepa-vision" in relation to television, which she saw as "massaging" the right side of the brain: the hemisphere that "controls nonsequential, nonanalytic, intuitive impulses." This stimulation, she wrote, "appears to have released telepathic and intuitive instincts."[26]

In the same issue of *Radical Software* that featured Bender's "Telepa-Vision," Dean Evenson advocated for the "cosmic awareness" he felt must animate teletechnological connectivity. Evenson's language evoking the communitarian ethos of the 1960s counterculture, promoted by the guru Stephen Gaskin, for example, who was also interested in telepathy. "With satellites, cassettes, cable systems, computers interfaced with one another, electronic energy can go freely around the globe," yet this is a "paltry substitute for true oneness via telepathy." Drawing on McLuhan's idea of electronic media as extensions of the central nervous system, Evenson imagined this marriage of telepathy and satellites as an overcoming of the limitations of the individual body: "The ego is a blockage of free flow and is related to our identity within our bodies, our pile of matter." Only when technology linked with a "spiritual love flow" that

[25] Tom Bender, "Telepa-Vision: The Communication of Mental Images," *Radical Software* Vol. 1 No. 5 (Spring 1972), 15.
[26] Lynn Hershman, "Reflections on the Electronic Mirror," in *New Artists Video*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1978), 37.

exceeds "being confined to our bodies," Evenson wrote, "can love flow into each other over great distances, a flow going in all directions to all people."[27]

In 1972, the same year that these articles by Bender and Evenson appeared in *Radical Software*, Jonas also invoked telepathy in her video performance *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* Unlike Acconci and Barry, Jonas did not explicitly attempt telepathy—even "quasi-ESP"—in this video performance. Jonas's oblique engagement with telepathy is elucidated by an observation she later made linking the vaguely paranormal potential of video and performance with a longer history of occult practice. "I always thought of myself as an electronic sorceress," Jonas told Hans Ulrich Obrist. As Jonas related, when she performed for the camera, often at night alone in her studio:

> I stepped into another space that was not the same as my everyday space. You could almost call it a séance. And that grainy quality of early video was so strange, even otherworldly.[28]

Jonas goes on to suggest that this "otherworldly," "séance"-like confluence of performance and video is "linked to the end of the nineteenth century, beginning of the twentieth, parallel with developments in the technologies of looking and recording, with all the spiritualists."[29] Here Jonas situates technological media in a context that was also host to occult mediums. This historical perspective indicates the formative relationship between telepathy and other teletechnological media. At the same time, the media archaeology of telepathy suggested here conjures the figure of the trance medium, who performed in séances. This figure complicates the technologically informed fantasies of

[27] Dean Evenson, "Open Ended Nervous System," Vol. 1 No. 5 (Spring 1972), *Radical Software*, 7.
[28] Joan Jonas, interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, in *Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews: Volume 2*, 396.
[29] Jonas, interview with Obrist, 396.

collective consciousness embraced by Bender and Evenson along with McLuhan (and at least tested by Acconci and Barry). According to this fantasy, there were no barriers to the commingling of minds, no resistance caused by individual differences once everyone was on the same wavelength, so to speak. In stark contrast to this frictionless connectivity, the medium raises the specter of gender and sexual difference at the center of early ideas and experiences of telepresence.

Spirit Rapping

Jonas has said that she got the phrase "visual telepathy" from a book on magic.[30] As she recalls, she was familiar with such books because her stepfather was an amateur magician.[31] Inverting the acronym TV, Organic Honey's "visual telepathy" is likely related to the trick of "mental television" described in "a handbook for conjurers" published in 1969. In order to simulate the telepathic transfer of an image, the magician asks the participant to draw something on a sheet of paper placed on top of a paperback book (or some other semi-soft surface) volunteered by the magician. The magician then uses this imprint to reconstruct the image, imitating its extrasensory transference. In order to convince the participant to make simple lines that are more easily traceable, the author suggests explaining: "Your vision is dim at best. You can liken it only to a television picture that is slightly out of focus and covered with 'snow.'"[32] The magician's trick of "mental television" recalls the genealogy of "occult and technical telesight" mapped by

[30] Jonas, "Transmission," 123.
[31] Jonas, in conversation with the author, May 8, 2017.
[32] Henning Nelms, *Magic and Showmanship: A Handbook for Conjurers* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 47.

Stefan Andriopolous, in which the emergence of television was bound up with clairvoyant possibilities of "seeing at a distance."[33] Yet the trick also appears to remediate a psychical experiment designed to prove the existence telepathy. In late nineteenth century psychical research, visual telepathy was one mode of testing telepathic transmission. In his book *Secrets of Stage Mindreading*, stage hypnotist and magician Ormond McGill describes "experiments in visual telepathy conducted by Professor Sir Oliver Lodge," a British physicist who had a key role in the development of radio and a Spiritualist who was briefly president of the Society for Psychical Research. In 1889, McGill reports, Lodge oversaw two evenings of visual telepathy, in which a "transmitter" chose an object (a square of blue silk, a key, a pair of scissors) and attempted to transfer its image to a blindfolded "percipient," who then drew the picture as it appeared in her mind's eye.[34]

Along with the now forgotten "telæsthesia," "telepathy" was coined in 1882 by Frederick W. Myers, a member of the Society for Psychical Research, to "cover all cases of impression received at a distance without the normal operation of the recognized sense

[33] Stefan Andriopoulos, "Psychic TV," in *Ghostly Apparitions: German Idealism, the Gothic Novel, and Optical Media* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 2013), 143. As Andriopoulos argues, television was not simply a matter of technological invention, but emerged in Europe in the late 1920s from a confluence of technical and occult practices. The initial reception of TV, he writes, was symptomatic of a "structural and mutually constitutive interrelation of television and clairvoyance," where the technological feat of seeing at a distance was bound up with ideas about seeing beyond the limitations of the body through extrasensory means.

[34] Ormond McGill, *Secrets of Stage Mindreading* (Crown House Publishing, 2003), 16-17, 16. Similar "experiments at a distance" involving the telepathic transfer of images are discussed by Northcote W. Thomas (also a member of the Society for Psychical Research) in *Thought Transference: A Critical and Historical Review of the Evidence for Telepathy, with a Record of New Experiments, 1902-1903* (London: Alexander Moring Limited, 1905).

organs."[35] The concept of telepathy became the basis for psychical research seeking to scientifically verify the claims of Spiritualism, a popular movement in the nineteenth century based on the belief that the dead could communicate with and make themselves present to the living.[36] These otherworldly transmissions and distant presences were channeled by "mediums" in séances—occult performances that appeared alongside magic shows on vaudeville and medicine show circuits.[37] These acts of channeling included trance speaking, automatic writing, and ectoplasm, where extrusions of otherworldly flesh issued from the medium's orifices. While new media such as spirit photography aided in making these mediumistic feats visible (and more readily believable), as Molly McGarry has written, "Spiritualists understood their own embodied religious practices and practitioners *as* media. Spiritualist media and performance were not merely attendant to the religion, a way to get out the word: mediation was Spiritualist practice itself."[38] Converging on the medium, "Spiritualist media and performance" were informed as much by new technologies as by ideas about female gender and sexuality.

When telepathy emerged around 1880, it was, as Thurschwell observes, "only one in a whole series of new 'tele' communications"—including the recently patented electric telephone—that enabled "previously unimaginable contact between people" by seeming

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[35] "Telepathy," *Oxford English Dictionary.*
[36] Thurschwell 8.
[37] As John Durham Peters has written, "One of the reasons for the success of spiritualism as a popular movement in the 1850s and after was that it was good theater." Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 96.
[38] Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 20. For the relationship between mediums and spirit photography see Tom Gunning, "Phantom Images and Modern Manifestations: Spirit Photography, Magic Theater, Trick Films, and Photography's Uncanny," in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*, ed. Patrice Petro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 42-71.

to "annihilate distances that separate bodies and minds from each other."[39] "Genealogically linked to the older concept of sympathy and the newer word empathy," Thurschwell writes, "telepathy is also related to love—the desire for the complete sympathetic union with the mind of another."[40] Telepathy's formative relationship both to telecommunications and to love is evident in countercultural invocations of the idea of telepathic connection later in the 1960s and 70s. Only with telepathy and technology combined, Evenson wrote, could "love flow into each other over great distances." The ethos of free love embraced by the counterculture has a precedent in the Spiritualist movement, which, as Ann Braude has shown, launched a critique of marriage based on the belief that sex should depend solely on love, not on institutionalized commitment.[41]

If the idea of telepathy was bound up with free love in the nineteenth century and later in the twentieth—reformulations of intimacy, new possibilities of widespread contact—it is an idea that has also disavowed the body. As the immaterial transfer of thought or feeling, telepathy seems to epitomize what John Durham Peters describes as the structuring fantasy of telecommunication: "communication without embodiment, contact achieved by the sharing of spiritual (electrical) fluids."[42] For Evenson, for example, the body was a lamentable container, a "pile of matter" impeding new ways of being together at a distance. With McLuhan's model of media, the body could be reimagined as a network of extensions enabling instantaneous relations on a global scale:

[39] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking* 22, 3.
[40] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 14.
[41] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 127-136.
[42] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air,* 139. "As a term that long signified physical or metaphysical action at a distance, 'communication' came, especially with the telegraph's harnessing of electricity for messages between people, to represent a state of shared understanding and instantaneous sympathy between people that could be achieved without reliance on the grosser vehicles of word or speech." Peters, 108.

a "world of ESP." Once electronic media unraveled the body into an extended nervous system, impediments to connection—not simply geographic distances, but corporeal specificity, identity, difference—could be transcended. A historical look at telepathy reveals how this ability to connect great distances was originally a specifically feminine one. This ability was rooted in perceived telecommunicative qualities of the bodies and minds of mediums, who were predominantly women.

Over thirty years prior to Myers's coinage of telepathy to test the claims of Spiritualism, the Spiritualist movement began with a "spiritual telegraph."[43] In 1848, two sisters, Kate and Margaret Fox, reported that a spirit had communicated with them through tapping noises audible throughout their home in Hydesville, New York. This "spirit rapping" bore a striking resemblance to the Morse's electronic telegraph system (patented in 1837), which similarly bridged vast distances through apparently immaterial and instantaneous means. John Durham Peters has argued that new modes of electronic telecommunications did not simply inform Spiritualist ideas of occult contact; Spiritualist practice was likewise integral to the cultural formation of these teletechnologies. As Peters writes, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, "spiritualism bequeaths both a vocabulary (medium, channel, and communication) and a repertoire of images (hypnosis, community of sensation, or the telepathic ties between distant lovers)" to modern understandings of communication at a distance.[44] What is perhaps not so apparent is the way that this vocabulary and repertoire is historically gendered.

In her chronicle of the formative relationship between Spiritualism and the struggle for women's rights in mid-nineteenth-century America, Braude observes that

[43] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 5.
[44] Peters, *Speaking into the Air,* 63.

both movements traced their inceptions to 1848 in upstate New York: the time and place that the Fox sisters heard their "spiritual telegraph" coincided with the Seneca Falls Convention, the first meeting to publicly address women's rights. As the Spiritualist and women's rights movements spread across the country, they continued to intermingle. "Not all feminists were Spiritualists, but all Spiritualists advocated woman's rights" as they agitated against Christian patriarchy.[45] As Braude argues, because "Spiritualism asserted that divine truth was directly accessible to individual human beings through spirit communication," the movement embodied a "radical individualism"—of self-sovereignty and self-ownership—that abetted abolitionist and feminist stances.[46] The critique of marriage mentioned above, for instance, was not just a simply an objective embrace of free love, but a quest to end "sexual slavery in marriage," where a woman was legally bound to yield to her husband's will.[47] Within Spiritualist practice and ideology, women were equal to men. Braude writes that the "prominence of women within Spiritualism resulted from a staunchly individualistic form of religious practice" based on the practice of mediumship, in which the information voiced by spirits could be accessed only by individual mediums.[48] If mediums were able to access spirits on an individual basis (in contrast the Christian hierarchy of authority), however, she did not speak as an individual. Her authority and ability to speak in public hinged on the spirits that spoke *through* her. As Braude describes, "[t]rance mediums were understood to be passive vehicles whose physical faculties were used by spirits to express the sentiments

[45] Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 3.
[46] Braude, *Radical Spirits,* 6. See also "Spiritualism and Radical Individualism" and "Woman's Right to Self-Ownership," 61-81.
[47] Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 129.
[48] Braude, *Radical Spirits,* 6-7.

of these unseen intelligences."[49] This "power from elsewhere," as Karen Beckman has put it, renders the medium a strategic but ambivalent feminist agent.[50]

Jill Galvan has linked the perception of the spirit medium as a "passive vehicle"—her status as not fully present—to what would become the vital role of women in both paranormal and technological modes of communication. Galvan argues that the advent of teletechnologies in the late nineteenth century was not simply a matter of harnessing electricity—itself a force associated with female sexuality—but integrating the "sympathetic excess" of the female nervous system.[51] Arguing against Friedrich Kittler's dismissal of gender in the emergence of technical media, Galvan writes, "only women generated what we might phrase as a sympathetic excess—an effective or spiritual quality—that could transform mediating apparatus into the carriers of intentional self-to-self communication."[52] This feminine excess linked spirit mediums with other "mediating women": telegraphers, typists, and telephone operators. With their apparent sensitivity and easy reversion to automatism, women were ideal mediators because they "combined the right kind of presence with the right kind of absence."[53] As Galvan writes,

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[49] Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 85.
[50] Karen Beckman, "Power from Elsewhere: Charismatic Authority and the American Female Medium," in *Imponderables: The Archives of Tony Oursler,* ed. Tom Eccles, Maja Hoffmann, and Beatrix Ruf (Zurich: JRP-Ringier, 2016), 469-475.
[51] Jill Galvan, Galvan*, The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, The Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 16. For the relationship between women's sexuality and electricity, see Galvan, 176-177.
[52] Galvan, *Sympathetic Medium,* 16. As Kittler argued in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, for instance, the typewriter led to the "desexualization of writing" as it allowed women to enter into textual production. See Galvan, 14-15. Kittler also wrote in *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*: "A medium is a medium is a medium. As the sentence says, there s no difference between occult and technological media." Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans, Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 229. Galvan, in contrast, underscores the key role of gender and sexual difference in the historical intersection of mediums and media.
[53] Galvan, *Sympathetic Medium,* 12.

"[c]ommon beliefs about women's limited capacity for 'brain-work' made it simple to think of them as just weak-minded conduits, and those representations assuaged fears about eavesdropping, among other distortions of knowledge transmission, by emptying out the medium's interposed presence."[54] By the close of the nineteenth century, this feminized model of an absent presence engendered, as Thurschwell has described, "a new figure, the (primarily female) information worker, whose access to others' minds results in anxieties about the permeable boundaries of individual knowledge."[55] On the one hand, the spirit medium-cum-information worker is a passive conduit: valued, sexualized, and objectified in her ability to fuse the "right kind of presence with the right kind of absence." On the other, she is potentially disruptive, threatening to exploit the "permeable boundaries of individual knowledge." She does this not only through her "potential for publicizing what is private or hidden" by eavesdropping, for instance, but also by performing the dissolution of individual identity at stake in the possibility of "transmitting subjectivity."[56]

Though seeming to hamper her agency—rendering her automatic—the technological quality of the medium opens onto the unfixed and transformative potential of her particular identity. McGarry highlights what she calls "the transformative politics of the body imagined and enacted by Spiritualists" eventually marginalized in American feminism.[57] She asks "how contemporary theories of sexuality might understand

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[54] Galvan, *Sympathetic Medium,* 63-64.
[55] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 10.
[56] Galvan, *Sympathetic Medium*, 17, 14.
[57] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past,* 65. Despite its early role as a feminist platform, Spiritualism was eventually relegated to the fringe of the women's movement. As McGarry writes, "Part of this move involved a reconstruction of female citizenship, shorn of the mystical, irrational, utopian politics of the antebellum era. What was lost in this

Spiritualist subjects who, in séances and through trance speaking, reembodied themselves in the opposite gender," and how the "mediumistic process of channeling differently gendered bodies produced another way of being in the world."[58] Though, beginning with Spiritualism, gender difference would be key to formations of both telepathic mediumship and teletechnological media, rather than a stable basis for identity, the "feminine element" prized by Spiritualism constituted its "amorphous sexual matrix."[59] As Tom Gunning has pointed out, even if mediums were male, "[a]ll mediums, men or women, had to be, in Spiritualist parlance, feminine, or negative…in order to let the spirit world manifest itself."[60] If men could become feminine while channeling spirits of different genders, female mediums were likewise often inhabited by male spirits. Released from a physical body, the very phenomenon of a spirit disturbs stable notions of gender identity that extended to their human channelers.[61]

As mediums channeled spirits—embodying the presences of others—their bodies became unfixed and unfixable sites of gender and sexual identity. Their performances "allowed connectivity without fixity, and occasioned 'touches across time' made possible not by a particular type of person but by the quality of receptivity."[62] McGarry suggests that figures like Walt Whitman and Radclyffe Hall, both of whom did not conform to the heterosexist culture of their time and were drawn to psychical research, "made sense of

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remaking of the women's rights movement was a place in American feminism for the transformative politics of the body imagined and enacted by Spiritualists."

[58] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past,* 16, 154.

[59] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past,* 159.

[60] Gunning, "Phantom Images," 52.

[61] A comparison from a different cultural context might be "two-spirit": a third non-binary way of embodying gender in some Native American cultures. Perhaps relatedly, McGarry has written on the connection between American Spiritualism and indigenous practices. See "Indian Guides: Haunted Subjects and the Politics of Vanishing," in *Ghosts of Futures Past*, 66-93.

[62] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past,* 176.

their own queer time" through spiritual conceptions of embodiment that uniquely offered them what the dominant secular culture would not: connectedness without fixed identity.[63] Like McGarry, Thurschwell draws on queer theory to address how "cultural imaginings of technologically uncanny contact are intertwined with an expanding sense of sex and gender flexibility."[64] This contact was both uncanny and potentially transgressive, bound up with new forms of intimacy and non-binary ways of inhabiting the body at stake in the emergence and eventual marginalization of telepathy.[65]

The Performer Sees Herself as a Medium

One of Jonas's favorite moments from the history of cinema is a scene from Federico Fellini's 1957 film *Nights of Cabiria* known as "The Mesmerist." According to Sung Hwan Kim, one of Jonas's former students at MIT, in one class "where everyone is asked to bring in a favorite scene from a film, Jonas chooses the scene from *Nights of Cabiria* where Cabiria is hypnotized. Her eyes are closed, she picks flowers that are not there, people laugh, her story is told, she is unconscious; it is a magic show."[66] The film's title character, a prostitute down on her luck played by Giulietta Masina, enters a concert hall where a magic show is taking place. Irritated, she finds a seat in the audience and is immediately spotted by the magician, who calls her up on stage. She reluctantly accepts his invitation and is about to turn around when he waves his hand over her head, hypnotizing her. Her eyes shut. The magician asks Cabiria what she desires most. Her

[63] McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past,* 172-173, 176.
[64] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 4.
[65] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 8.
[66] Sung Hwan Kim, "Organic Honey's Name," in *Joan Jonas: Five Works*, ed. Valerie Smith (New York: Queens Museum, 2003), 94.

vexed expression melts as he conjures her a lover, her face now blooming with happiness. She is entranced: plucking imaginary flowers and dancing across the stage, she inhabits another world, an invisible "there" made manifest only to her as the hushed audience looks on (fig. 2.9). A cymbal chimes and she returns, dazed and ashamed before the crowd and her hypnotist, who doffs his top hat to reveal a pair of devil horns.

The power of this moving scene from *Nights of Cabiria* stems from Masina's ability to channel two characters at once: the disenchanted prostitute and the woman head-over-heels in love. In this sense Masina's performance mirrors Cabiria's own act of channeling under the magician's control. In her entranced state under the stage lights, Cabiria is at once intensely present and uncannily absent (as Kim notes, she appears "unconscious"). As she performs, she is both there and not there. On the one hand, Cabiria is a puppet of the hypnotist. Unconscious, she is under his control—a position no doubt related to her particular profession (historically, trance mediums were affiliated with prostitutes).[67] On the other hand, Cabiria's trace allows her access (however brief) to a state outside her workaday reality as a star-crossed sex worker. She is at once imprisoned and liberated by her possession.

As Jonathan Crary has written, hypnosis, when it emerged as a "technology of attention" in the nineteenth century, promised "at least the fantasy of rendering behavior both automatic and predictable." "Even though the hypnotic trance was a profoundly ambiguous state, it became a powerful image of docility," Crary writes.[68] Yet troubling this fantasy of controlled focus and automatic behavior was the "profoundly ambiguous" nature of trance. Along with other subjective states like reverie and dissociation, Crary

[67] See Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 121-123.
[68] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 65, 68.

argues that trance represents "a domain of resistance internal to any routinization or coercion" of attention, producing "novelty, difference, and instability" within normative modes of consciousness.[69] At the same time, as "a loss of self-possession," trance troubled notions of subjectivity as self-mastery—flaunted by Fellini's maestro magician, for instance.[70] To be possessed is to be dispossessed of a stable subjectivity. The possibility of trance entails a subjectivity that "ceases to be synonymous with a consciousness that is essentially self-present to itself;" a subjectivity no longer inevitably consistent with "a thinking 'I.'"[71] Oscillating between disempowerment and freedom from the status quo, this is the mediumistic model of subjectivity: a radical dispossession of self-presence.

Recalling her acquisition of the phrase "visual telepathy" from a book on magic, Jonas would later characterize her performance as Organic Honey as a kind of magic show. "In exploring the possibilities of female imagery, thinking always of a magic show, I attempted to fashion a dialogue between my different disguises and the fantasies they suggested."[72] In her 1972 review of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, Constance de Jong likewise noted the magical quality of the performance: "Joan Jonas uses video TV was an imagemaker and conjures herself," she wrote, "the TV was a mediumistic device…a magic and an instructive tool." "Joan the conjurer," she remarked.[73] In contrast to the magic show in *Nights of Cabiria*, in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, Jonas is

[69] Crary, *Suspensions*, 77. As Crary writes, "institutional models of attention based on imperatives of recognition, identity, and stabilization are never fully separate from nomadic models of attention [e.g. trance and daydream] that generate novelty, difference, and instability."
[70] Crary, *Suspensions*, 66.
[71] Crary, *Suspensions*, 58.
[72] Jonas, "Closing Statement," 137.
[73] Constance De Jong, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," *TDR/The Drama Review*, Vol. 16, No 2 (June 1972), 63, 64.

both conjurer and conjured. "In *Organic Honey* I wanted to create the idea of a magic show where the woman would be the transformer, or the one who is transformed," Jonas told Robin White in 1979.[74] Taking the role of the conjurer, Jonas breaks out of the role of magician's assistant that is typically reserved for women. Yet, at the same time, she does not leave behind the seemingly passive position given to the entranced Cabiria: "the performer sees herself as a medium." In *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, Jonas engaged the ambiguous feminist possibility of the medium's subjectivity—a possibility that surfaced in other technologically-inflected performances made by women in the 1970s.

Organic Honey is something of an automaton. "Wearing the mask of a doll's face transformed me into an erotic electronic seductress," Jonas has said.[75] As Jonas peers through the eyeholes of her plastic face with its bemused expression, she appears less sexy than creepy. She is uncannily animate and inanimate, recalling the clockwork automaton Olimpia in E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale "The Sand-Man" described by Freud. Corresponding to Organic Honey's automaton-like appearance is a sense of her performance as automatic behavior. In the video version of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, made in 1972 as she prepared her first public performance of the piece, the doll-like presence of Organic Honey moves about her private world as if possessed—or, *not fully there* (fig. 2.10). The video begins with Jonas's back facing towards the viewer. She hums to herself as she dons her mask. She then begins the activity of dropping pennies into the submerged short glass, and is mesmerized by this activity. In a later sequence, a bare light bulb swings hypnotically before a triangular mirror. Organic

[74] Joan Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979." *View* Vol. II No. I (April 1979), 11.
[75] Jonas, "Transmission," 123.

Honey approaches the mirror slowly as the light swings back and forth, moving in a daze. The enigmatic activities continue, as Jonas at once automatically performs tropes of femininity (e.g. coyly giggling) and distorts them, making them strange (e.g. the giggling turns to phony hysterical laughter). Watching this video, one could ask, as Crary does of Freud's Anna O.: is Jonas/Organic Honey "simultaneously conforming to learned set of social expectations and indulging in the 'private theater' of her own daydreaming?"[76]

The automaton-like nature of Organic Honey's presence was echoed by a videotape that played partway through the performance version of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. The tape, titled *Anxious Automation*, was made by Richard Serra in collaboration with Jonas and Phillip Glass in 1971. Onscreen, Jonas faces the viewer while lying on her back. From this supine position she performs a limited series of actions with her arms—moving her bent elbows back and forth, tapping her head and arms. Her actions are further animated—or automated—by the alternating zooms of two video cameras manned by Serra. The staccato visual rhythm generated by this rapid switching back and forth between two cameras is accompanied by a simple percussive score by Glass—described in the performance script as "rhythmic tapping sounds."[77] If this description echoes the telegraphic "spirit rapping" perceived by the Fox sisters, *Anxious Automation* shows a prone female subject whose actions do not stem fully from herself, but are animated by an external force. Yet because of this interference of body and technical circuitry the viewer is not given direct access to the female subject, even through frantic zooms. This dynamic was redoubled in the technological set up of the

[76] Crary, *Suspensions*, 100. Crary refers to Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), 233.
[77] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 47.

performance, which made Organic Honey visible only through her mediation—never in her unadorned presence.

Though Jonas did not make automatic drawings—a Surrealist technique historically linked to mediumship—in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, drawing provided a mode of entranced focus.[78] In the sequence directly before *Anxious Automation*, Jonas kneeled beside a mirror on the floor covered with white paper next to a collection of objects. Mangolte's camera was stationed over the paper so that a field of white was projected on the wall (this angle is visible in the video version of the piece). Jonas tipped up her mask on top of her head so that Organic Honey's face stared into the camera. After Jonas emptied an assortment of objects from a box—a hand mirror, knit doll, shimmering coin purse, roll of electrical tape, silver spoon, hammer, and differently shaped stones—she rapidly places one object at a time on the sheet of paper and traces its outline with a magic marker (fig. 2.11). There is a circuit breaker beside her; whenever her hand breaks the circuit a harsh buzzer sounds, adding to the intensity of the activity. She traces and removes, traces and removes: "As each object is delineated, it disappears."[79] Though these are personal items (the doll given to Jonas by her grandmother, for instance), the drawing is the opposite of a subjective transcription. Rather, it is an exercise that appears to loosen her consciousness through repetitive, rhythmic action. This entranced evacuation of self is accentuated when Jonas tears the

[78] See André Breton, "The Automatic Message" (1933), in *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont, (London: Pluto Press, 1978), and Breton, "The Mediums Enter," in *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996). For more on the link between Surrealism and Spiritualism see Rachel Leah Thompson, "The Automatic Hand: Spiritualism, Psychoanalysis, Surrealism," *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, Issue 7 (Spring 2004).

[79] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 46.

drawing away to reveal a mirror lying beneath the paper and proceeds to smash her reflection with the hammer: a kind of exorcism.

In her later performances, Jonas would further explore drawing as a mode of ritual or trance induction.[80] On a broader level, drawing in performance had the effect of allowing Jonas to disassociate from her conscious mind. "If you're concentrating on the performance, you can't worry about what the drawing is going to look like," she told White. "[A] lot of strange things have come out."[81] Jonas devised workshops where participants were asked to draw while they were laughing or having an argument, so that, as White put it, "laughing or talking preoccupies your conscious mind so that the other part of you is free to do something else."[82] In *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, these dissociative techniques are correlated to occult mediumship and technical mediation as Jonas, who is at the same time Organic Honey, "[d]raws, conjuring mystical messages"—circles measured by lines; a line snaking endlessly through a grid; a sun that, partially erased, becomes a new moon—while she looks into the video monitor rather that the drawing surface (fig. 2.12-13).[83] Though it presented the images in real time so that Jonas could draw continuously with the time of performance, video introduced a subtle dissociation within the concerted action of drawing, slightly separating her hand from her consciousness. "Alchemical transformation of the mandala," reads the performance

[80] The primary example is Mirage (1976), in which Jonas, inspired by yogic meditation techniques, became "possessed" while drawing a grid onstage and moving rhythmically within it. See "Mirage" in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 78.
[81] Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White," 6.
[82] White in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White," 6.
[83] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 49.

script, invoking the cosmological imagery used for meditation and trance induction in Hindu and Buddhist traditions.[84]

Around the same time that Jonas was performing as Organic Honey, Carolee Schneemann invoked the mediumistic model of subjectivity through drawing in her video performance *Up to and Including Her Limits.* This piece began as *Trackings*, which Schneemann performed first in 1970 at the London Filmmakers Cooperative (where she would again perform *Up to and Including Her Limits* in 1974) and later at the 10th Annual Avant Garde Festival at Grand Central Station in New York in 1973. The piece was inspired by tree surgeon, who Schneemann watched as he pruned branches while suspended in a harness. She decided to create a similar apparatus to suspend her nude body. Schneemann later described the set up of the first performance of *Trackings* in London in 1970:

> In one dank corner I had mounted a ¾-inch 12-foot-long manila rope from the ceiling: in the light of a filmless projector, I hung a harness, for the prolonged swinging which would guide crayon strokes, marks, color slashing floor, walls, from my extended hand and body.[85]

Even while hanging from the ceiling nude, as Schneemann performed "in the light of a filmless projector," her body was mediated even in its apparent presence (fig. 2.14). Schneemann later elaborated this complication of the seeming immediacy of the female body by adding live and recorded video into the work.

Beginning with version of the piece performed at the Berkeley Art Museum in 1973, Schneemann integrated video into *Up to and Including Her Limits*. Like *Organic*

[84] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 49.
[85] Carolee Schneemann, "VALIE" (2000), in *Imaging Her Erotics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 97.

Honey's Visual Telepathy, where a camerawoman was scripted into the piece alongside Jonas and the other performers, Scheemann's performance eventually involved camerawomen who video-recorded the performance in real time. "Video a team of three women has instructions to watch, wait, and film actions at the moment that they are most realized (unselfconscious)," Schneemann wrote. "Their main attention is to my motions on the rope; the cat, spectators, and related events are taped as well. Repetition, mirroring, replay."[86] Later performances included video screens that displayed these live feeds as well as recordings of earlier performances (Schneemann also screened her film, *Kitch's Last Meal* [1973-1978] alongside the live performance) (fig. 2.15). Eventually, the accumulated recordings replaced the live action of *Up to and Including Her Limits* alongside the record of Schneemann's drawn marks.[87] Yet within the performance itself, video corresponded precisely to "actions at the moment that they are most realized (unselfconscious)." Rather than simply recording her actions, video dovetailed with "actions at the moment that they are most realized"—revealing this ostensibly present moment and Schneemann's unselfconscious existence within it to be multiple, divided, distanced from itself: "Repetition, mirroring, replay."

In *Up to and Including Her Limits*, the physical suspension of the tree surgeon's harness correlated to a suspension of conscious intention. The harness, Schneemann later

[86] Carolee Schneemann, "*Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1973-1976, Berkeley Notes, Structural concept of the actions," in *Carolee Schneemann: Kinetic Painting*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Munich and Salzburg: Prestel and Museum der Moderne, 2016), 230.
[87] Sabine Breitwieser, "Kinetic Painting: Carolee Schneemann's Media," in *Carolee Schneemann: Kinetic Painting*, 24. *Up to and Including Her Limits* now exists as an installation with the hanging rope, drawing made by Schneemann during one of the performances, and six monitors showing edited and colorized video footage of the various performances.

explained, was designed "to sustain an entranced period of drawing."[88] Gripping the rope with her left hand, Schneemann held two crayons in her right hand, marking two walls and the floor lined with paper as she swung in the harness. "Suspended on the rope, the 'automatic drawing' maps time process and the time process is 'charted' (factored) by spatial signs," Schneemann described.[89] As Schneemann developed the piece, she articulated ideas of automatism and possession in terms of occult practice.[90] "Transference of information-processing between performer and audience involves questions of telepathy and parapsychology—the perceptions which bind us during the course of an action extend our physical and conceptual expectations—a synesthetic touching on extrasensory processes," Schneemann recorded in her notes for the performance, where she also toyed with devices like the Ouija board and schizograph.[91] In order to achieve this state of automatism, Schneemann described turning herself into "a drawing machine" as opposed to a "male phallus pencil."[92] This was achieved through "[a]n identification with being taken over, possessed not a process of will."[93] This mode of possessed transcription—where the performer becomes "a drawing machine"—echoes the Surrealist techniques of automatism received through Pollock (the performance,

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[88] Carolee Schneemann, "Statement for *Texte Zur Kunste*" (1999), in *Imaging Her Erotics*, 165.
[89] Schneemann, "Up to and Including Her Limits" in *More than Meat Joy* (1979, 1997), ed. Bruce R. McPherson, reprinted *Imaging Her Erotics*, 163.
[90] According to Kristine Stiles, paranormal influences on Schneemann's work have been suppressed because (as she expressed to Stiles) Schneemann feared that she would be considered "too crazy" if she acknowledged the role of parapsychology in her art. Kristine Stiles, "Anomaly, Sky, Sex, and Psi in Fluxus," in *Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia and Rutgers University, 1958-1972*, ed. Geoffrey Hendricks (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 84 and 88n111.
[91] Carolee Schneemann Papers, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Series I. Projects, 1960-1994, Box 3, Folder 8.
[92] Carolee Schneemann Papers. Series I. Projects, 1960-1994, Box 3, Folder 8.
[93] Carolee Schneemann Papers, Series I. Projects, 1960-1994, Box 3, Folder 8.

Schneemann wrote, "was the direct result of Pollock's physicalized painting process").[94] Yet, Schneemann more precisely invokes the subjectivity of the medium—one who is taken over, possessed—to counter the "male phallus pencil" as a signifier of mastery over the unconscious.[95]

Branden W. Joseph speaks to this distinction in his discussion of Hilma af Klint, a Swedish painter engaged with occult practices in the early twentieth century. Considering that some of af Klint's paintings were "'[c]ommissioned' during a séance," authorized not by her own creative will but by spirits, Joseph aligns her "esoteric relationship to subjective agency" with "the spirit medium's lack of intentional subjectivity."[96] This apparent lack of agency, he argues, "implies a form of alterity," as af Klint, when she painted, "phantasmatically projected [herself] onto an 'other'": a spirit-being that sanctioned her work.[97] Given its indebtedness to "an Enlightenment ideal of self-possessed knowledge," Modernist art, therefore, cannot account for an artist like af Klint. As Joseph observes, this "ideal of self-reflexive, intentional knowledge" extended to "even those, such as the abstract Expressionists, who sought to harness their unconscious."[98] Hence Schneemann's rejection of the "male phallus pencil" in making her own automatic drawings and physicalized paintings. Recalling the automatic women

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[94] Schneemann, "Up to and Including Her Limits," 165.
[95] Schneemann referenced the figure of the medium in a 1975 letter to Jonas Mekas: "The spiritual & physical medium; the constant presence, mediation between the hearth & the woods, domestic routine & private impulse, para-normal events & the 'ordinary' human patterns around them." Schneemann also suggests that Kitch, whose dead body she would display in one version of *Up to and Including Her Limits* at the Kitchen, was a kind of medium. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Series III. Correspondence, ca. 1959-1994 (currently misfiled in David James folder).
[96] Branden W. Joseph, "Knowledge, Painting, Abstraction, and Desire," in *Hilma af Klint: Seeing is Believing*, ed. Kurt Almqvist and Louise Belfrage (London: Koenig Books, 2017), 119, 121.
[97] Joseph, "Knowledge, Painting, Abstraction, and Desire," 121, 120.
[98] Joseph, "Knowledge, Painting, Abstraction, and Desire," 121.

that were at once mediums and media, Schneemann's entranced performance multiplied through drawing and video explored the effects of "being taken over" and how this seemingly passive mode of subjectivity challenged masculinist notions of self-mastery.

Anticipating Schneemann's critique of the singular and self-mastering creative subject through possession, in 1972, Susan Hiller's project *Draw Together* took psychical research into telepathy as a premise for long-distance collaborative production. Hiller has cited telepathic experiments described in the *Journal of the Society of Psychical Research* as a precedent, as well as "the original idea done by Upton Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair," where "she would go into one room and draw something, while he pulled something out of a hat"—an activity that resembles Lodge's exercises in visual telepathy.[99] Echoing the Sinclairs, either Hiller or her partner, David Coxhead, would, at a predetermined time, draw a number from a hat that corresponded to a particular found image (from a newspaper or magazine, etc.), and then concentrate on transmitting that image to a number of friends in different places. The friend would then mail them a drawing of "what they had picked up."[100]

Once, after Hiller was done with her telepathic work for the day, she began to make haphazard marks with a pencil and then saw them congeal into words as her pencil kept going, seeming "to have a mind of its own"—an activity she recognized as automatic writing.[101] When Coxhead attempted the same, he evidently received the message "no men"—a communiqué that anagrammatically served as the title for Hiller's

[99] Susan Hiller, "Duration and Boundaries" (1975), in *Thinking About Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller*, ed. Barbara Einzig (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 180.
[100] Hiller, "Duration and Boundaries" (1975), 181.
[101] "I was aware at that time that some mediums used automatic 'writing,' and that the technique had produced material used by Jung, Swedenborg, Yeats, and the Surrealists," Hiller, n.p. Reproduced in *Susan Hiller*, ed. Ann Gallagher (London: Tate, 2011).

new piece: *Sisters of Menon*.[102] As Lucy Lippard has written, "Hiller's first experience with automatism in 1972 was a landmark in her extension of identity from individual to collective."[103] This is because the writings obsessively, or as Lippard notes, permutationally, deconstruct the identity of "I," as a panoply of questions spin off from the query: "Who is this one"?[104] "Plural, female, and rhapsodic, the 'writers' called themselves 'Sisters of Menon.' In a script that was not her own, they beseeched Hiller to join their company."[105] Originally exhibited in 1973, the *Sisters of Menon* texts were the lost and rediscovered in 1979, when they were collected as an artist's book and displayed on the wall in a cruciform arrangement.[106] As Hiller wrote in her notes for Sisters of Menon, "'I' feel more like a series of activities than an impermeable, corporeal unit…or rather, 'I' AM NOT A CONTAINER." "My 'self' is a site for thoughts, feelings, sensations, not an impermeable, corporeal boundary," she later wrote. "Identity is a collaboration. The self is multiple."[107] When the self is not fully present, it may then be opened to collaborations in identity.

As feminist engagements with the seemingly passive status of the medium indicate, the medium's presumed lack of will depends on notions of agency rooted in a

[102] Lippard, Preface to *Thinking About Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller,* xiv.
[103] Lippard, Preface*,* xiii. *Draw Together* was one of Hiller's "group investigation" pieces, which included *Street Ceremonies* (1973), a large-scale community performance in which a group of people drew a half-mile circle around a London neighborhood on the autumnal equinox, and *Dream Mapping* (1974), a collaborative piece involving seven participants based on the possibility of shared dreams. As it occurred telepathically, *Draw Together* not only challenged the concepts of individual expression or sole authorship, it tested the borders of individual identity. This line of questioning was established in 1973, when Hiller exhibited two projects in London under both her name and her pseudonym, Ace Posible, so that the show became, as Lippard writes, "a collaboration between a socially recognizable self and 'another' self" (x).
[104] Hiller, "Notes IV," Sisters of Menon, n.p.
[105] Stuart Morgan (1984), quoted in "Automatic Writing, 1979-81," in *Susan Hiller*, 62.
[106] Lippard, Preface, xiv.
[107] Quoted in Lippard, Preface, xiii

masculinist conception of subjectivity: a mastering subject that is always "present to itself." As Braude observes, the "very qualities that rendered women incompetent when judged against norms for masculine behavior rendered them capable of mediumship."[108] With her power obscured by male norms (and perhaps related rejections of occult knowledge), she reappeared in performances of the 1970s to offer a critique of masculinist conceptions of authorship and subjectivity. Jonas would take Schneemann and Hiller's engagements with mediumistic subjectivity in another direction, performing identity as a collaboration by sharing her consciousness with an alter ego. This would lead to a different idea of telepathy as the possibility of a collective consciousness: a possibility that had to reckon with difference rather than transcend it.

Distance Within

As she sat in her low wicker chair trying her mask and various costumes for the camera, Jonas's "self-portrait in transition" that became *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* did not simply flow from her unconscious. In her journal beside notes on making an "abstract self portrait," she records: "Jack Smith."[109] Jonas's initial experiments with video were informed by the performances of Smith, which she attended with Richard Serra upon their return from Japan in 1970. After sitting through lengthy Noh productions, they were prepared for the duration of Smith's performances, and Jonas went every Saturday night for weeks.[110] She has recalled the how the performances were

[108] Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 82.
[109] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated c. 1971-1972).
[110] Michael Snow told Jonas and Serra to see the performances, which were scheduled to begin at midnight on Saturdays, though theatricalized delays were inevitable and

"very intimate, in his space": a two-story loft where half of the top floor had been removed and, beneath, an audience of no more than ten people perched on rickety bleachers that Smith constructed from two-by-fours. During the inevitable delays, he would periodically emerge and offer everyone drinks. The way that Jonas actively staged the video apparatus in the public versions of the Organic Honey series likewise suggests the influence of Smith, who incorporated slide projections, record players, radio, and, at least once, a closed-circuit video system into his performances.[111]

Smith, who had his own alter ego—Rose Courtyard, who wore a "red gown and gloves, bijoux jewelry and a blood-red tangle of hair" with "a papier-mâché mask over the lower part of he face"—clearly had an impact on Jonas's presentation of self in the Organic Honey series (fig. 16).[112] As J. Hoberman has written, the importance of Smith for "'performance artists' of the mid-1970s" lay in "his refusal to separate his persona from his art."[113] Though inseparable from his person, this "persona" was no stable identity. Just as all of the "parts male and female in the Noh are played by men wearing

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expected. When they did finally begin, the performances lasted for over four hours. The following recollections from Jonas interview with Edward Leffingwell, Jack Smith Curatorial Files, Fales Special Collections. Following quotations and recollections from this interview.

[111] Dominic Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe: Jack Smith, performance and visual culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012). Dominic Johnson describes a video document titled Midnight at the Plaster Foundation that records twenty minutes of Smith's performance Claptailism of Palmola Christmas Spectacle (1970-1971). As Johnson writes, the video "clearly shows how Smith staged his works not as presentations or collaborations, but as violent collisions with audience members and fellow performers" (50). The video apparatus became involved in these collisions as Smith instructed and berated the cameraman ("Please get the trees. Please. *Pleeeeease*.") and then turned to apologize and shout at the audience (51). Though Jonas attended a number of Smith's performances in 1970, she does not recall seeing this one. Jonas, in conversation with the author, May 8, 2017.

[112] Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe,* 123, 46. Johnson describes the appearance of Rose Courtyard in Smith's 1969 film *Song for Rent*.

[113] J. Hoberman, "The Theatre of Jack Smith," *TDR/The Drama Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 1979), 3.

masks in kimonos," Jonas has recalled, "Jack often played all the parts, male and female—if there were parts—in outlandish attire, holding a manipulating bizarre objects while playing old records and blowing bubbles, for instance."[114] The influence of Smith's approach to performance roots Organic Honey in the "queer fairy-tale worlds" constructed by Smith, where, as José Esteban Muñoz described, enactments of non-normative identity were at stake.[115]

Given that Smith was queer and his work had been censored as sexually deviant, given that he loathed capitalism and lived in poverty, as Muñoz wrote, Smith's "world-making project" was constituted by his disidentification "with the constraining and phobic limit of the present."[116] As Muñoz defined it, disidentification is a strategy for minoritarian subjects that "tries to transform a cultural logic from within," offering spectators whose identities (sexual, racial, gender, etc.) are marginalized by the mainstream culture the ability to "mutate and restructure stale patterns within dominant media."[117] Muñoz proposes a certain relationship of performance to the media through which representations of identity mediated by pop culture may be recycled and modified through renegade performances of identity. So Smith's alter ego Rose Courtyard, for instance, transformed the matronly celebrity of Rose Kennedy, the matriarch of the Kennedy family, into a performance of grotesque femininity and queer subjectivity: the "scare-queen courtesan," as Dominic Johnson has described her, complete with "layers of

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[114] Joan Jonas, "Jack Smith, 1970…" *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas*, ed. Jonas and Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015), 141.
[115] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 171.
[116] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia,* 169.
[117] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 11, 29.

make-up," "hairy chest and knotted wig."[118] Jonas's "TV Persona" did not derive directly from television, though she moved through a series of "traditional stylized roles" traditionally reserved for women.[119] Rather, Organic Honey brings disidentification into dialogue with the dissociative subjectivity of the medium, revealing its potential for critiques of normative identity.

Organic Honey was one of a number of alter egos that proliferated in the performance art of the 1970s. Around the same moment, artists such as Eleanor Antin, Lynne Hershman Leeson, and Adrian Piper devised, embodied, and enacted second selves. Antin became the King of Solana Beach and Eleanor Antinova, Leeson morphed into Roberta Breitmore, and Piper incarnated the Mythic Being. These selves were constructed and distributed through multiple media: video, film, photography, and newspapers. As Cherise Smith has shown, artists like Antin and Piper performed self and other simultaneously (and never seamlessly, or convincingly) to transgress received borders of identity.[120] Building on Smith's study, Uri McMillan has identified a strategy of "avatar production" he argues is central to performance art. Particularly crucial for black women beginning with the violent subjection of slavery, the performance of avatars enabled oppressed and marginalized subjects to mess with assigned roles of rules of proper embodiment.[121] Drawing on the original Hindu meaning of the word, McMillan writes that the avatar is both "a spiritual reincarnation and an alternate self." "Avatars, in

[118] Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe*, 123.
[119] Jonas, "Show Me Your Dances…," 15.
[120] Cherise Smith *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
[121] Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 12.

short, act as mediums—between the spiritual and earthly as well as the abstract and the real."[122]

The "avatar" that perhaps most fits with McMillan's notion of the medium is Piper's Mythic Being. This Being initially appeared in enigmatic ads published in *The Village Voice* on a monthly basis from September 1973 until August 1975. In the first ad, from September 1973, the figure, sporting an Afro hairdo, handlebar mustache, and dark glasses, stares out impassively from the standard square of newsprint, lifting a slim cigar to "his" lips. A handwritten message fills a cartoonish thought bubble: *Today was the first day of school. The only decent boys in my class are Robbie and Clyde. I think I like Clyde. 9-21-61* (fig. 2.17). The Mythic Being was Piper herself, dressed in an idiosyncratic drag outfit designed to transform her "individual self into its seeming opposite."[123] Following the initial phase of serialized ads in *The Village Voice* and street performance in New York City, Piper elaborated the production and circulation of her "opposite" through photographic series and poster editions, and continued to perform the Being in public and private following her move to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1975 to pursue a doctorate in philosophy. The expansive, multi-year work was cumulatively titled *The Mythic Being*.

As Piper wrote in her notes for the project, her "transformation" into the Mythic Being was based on "ritualized repetition—and therefore exorcism—of passages in my personal journal."[124] The passage also served as a "mantra" that Piper chanted repeatedly as a performative aid to becoming the Mythic Being in private and public—intoning it as

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[122] McMillan, 11.
[123] Adrian Piper, "Mythic Being: Getting Back," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight, Vol. 1: Selected Writings on Meta-Art, 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 147.
[124] Piper, "Mythic Being: Getting Back," 147.

she pasted on her mustache and donned her Afro wig in her apartment, waited for the subway, and walked down the street. The serialized mantras became a "behavioral reinforcement of a process of internal metamorphosis" that echoed Piper's deployment of reproductive media to disperse her identity.[125] In order to "transcend the limits of my individual identity and incorporate my 'other' into my sense of self," as Piper described, she performed tropes associated with race, class, and gender.[126] In so doing, she tapped spiritual techniques associated with the New Age movement, using "mantras," "ritual," and yogic exercises to effect psychic transformation in personal and public contexts (fig. 2.18). As "mantras," the excerpts from her journal had a mystical function, enabling her to lose possession of her selfhood by becoming entranced. Piper has likewise discussed the meditative practice of yoga, which she began practicing at age sixteen, as instrumental to "dissolving the subject-object distinction through meditation" and facilitating the "dissolution of my personal identity" in preparation for *The Mythic Being*.[127]

Like the Mythic Being, Organic Honey is not simply Jonas's double but her opposite. "That this character was my opposite and a stranger was what interested me," Jonas told Liss and Forti a year after the first performance of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*.[128] In becoming Organic Honey, Jonas practiced being self and other at the same time, to borrow Smith's formulation. As her uncanny nature suggests—with her human eyes staring out of her doll's face—Jonas's transformation into Organic Honey was always incomplete. This mode of performance is perhaps linked to Noh, which

[125] Piper, "Notes on the Mythic Being II," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight,* 123
[126] Piper, "Mythic Being: Getting Back," 147.
[127] Piper, "Kinds of Performing Objects I Have Been: Notes for Rosemary Mayer's 'Performance and Experience,'" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, 89-90.
[128] Jonas in "Show Me Your Dances…," 15

inspired Jonas's interest in masks.[129] With her shapely cheeks and parted lips, the erotic mask bears a surprising resemblance to the curved features of female Noh characters. As Richard Schechner wrote ten years after Jonas's performance, "In Noh, below the delicate white mask of the young female the spectator sees the thick, dark jowls of the mature male performer. The extreme formality of Noh leaves no doubt that this double exposure is no accident. Why is part of the main actor's face left showing—therefore undercutting the very illusion the mask and the costume create? Is not the delight of Noh increased by the knowledge of the incomplete transformation achieved?"[130] Akin to Smith's performance of Rose Courtyard with her makeup and hairy chest, or the male Noh actors' faces that show from beneath their feminine masks, it is significant that Jonas and Organic Honey never simply melded. This rejection of equivalence precluded the idea that, through telepathy, one could trespass the distance between minds and co-possess an other's knowledge and emotions instantaneously.

Piper's explicitly intersectional approach to identity through *The Mythic Being*—a project that interrogated not only gender but race and class identity—reveals a certain blind spot within Jonas's performance. Namely, how Jonas's "opposite" was, in part, informed by tropes of Asian femininity that are left unquestioned by the piece. While the Asian aspects of the piece—costumes and imagery—are no doubt also related to the inspiration of Noh, they form a palpable if unacknowledged component of Jonas's performed identity. In the opening sequence, Jonas reveals the portrait of a Japanese woman hanging on the wall. As Jonas looks at her masked face in the mirror, she reflects

[129] "I became interested in masks when I went to Japan in 1970," Jonas remarked in Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed., (Milan: Skira Editore, 2000), 123.
[130] Richard Schechner, "Points of Contact" (1982), in *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 8.

light on the portrait: establishing a relationship between her masked self (Organic Honey sometimes wears a silk kimono) and the Japanese woman—"interplay of erotic imagery," the script reads.[131] When Organic Honey dons her jeweled headdress and lets her tresses blow in the breeze of a fan, she is intended to create an "[i]mage of imitation Bengali goddess."[132] Jonas's use of the word "imitation" in the performance script again suggests the influence of Smith, who approached and adopted non-Western identities as representations of representations: namely, through Hollywood exotica and, as Johnson puts it, "cheesecake Orientalia." As Johnson suggests, Smith's "Egyptomania," for instance, "might be read as a ransacking of theatrical conventions in order to deploy a politics of performance."[133] Nevertheless, Jonas's overlooked reliance on stylizations of Asian femininity is indicative of divisions within the feminist movement of the 1970s (and today) along lines of race and class. All the more reason why, by the 1970s, telepathy as a kind of neutral communal consciousness could only be a fantasy. It should be noted here, too, that aspects of nineteenth century Spiritualist practice were originally inspired by Asian mysticism.[134]

Like Organic Honey, Piper's Mythic Being never stabilized into a stable identity.[135] That these performed selves refused to resolve under various categorical

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[131] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 44.
[132] Jonas, "Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 44.
[133] Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe*, 204, 207.
[134] See Luckhurst, "Phantasmal Empire," in *The Invention of Telepathy*, 154-160.
[135] Though Piper referred to him as a "a third-world, working-class, overtly hostile male," he has also been called "a tough and combatant street kid;" "a hip, street-wise African American man;" and "masquerading as one of the rock group Santana's roadies," to cite just a few. Piper, "The Mythic Being: Getting Back," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, 147; Maurice Berger, "Styles of Radical Will: Adrian Piper and the Indexical Present," Laura Cottingham, "The 'Autobiography' of Adrian Piper," and Kobena Mercer, "Decentering and Recentering: Adrian Piper's Spheres of Influence," in *Adrian Piper: A Retrospective,*

lenses attests to these artists' experimental approach to identity within a social body riven with new formations of difference. The public became a problem in the 1970s: the decade that, as the historian Bruce Schulman has written, witnessed both the emergence of our contemporary notion of diversity and the "implosion of American public life."[136] As Schulman writes, "the emphasis on diversity, on cultural autonomy and difference, echoed throughout 1970s America," as a "new conception of the public arena emerged: Americans based their claims on the commonweal […] less on their common rights and privileges as citizens than on their specific cultural identities."[137] This shift in public life and "attempt to reconstruct the nation as congeries of separate private refuges revealed itself across the traditional political spectrum and among all demographic groups."[138] Ironically, a new sense of cultural difference was the thread that united Americans as it simultaneously divided them.

Both *The Mythic Being* and Jonas's Organic Honey series responded to the greater infiltration of American social life by media networks—where television, for instance, mediated available identities and interactions within one another. Yet with the ambiguous identities at their centers, both of these performances also engaged the reformulation of the public realm itself through a new politics of diversity that emerged in the 1970s. These were acts of self-fashioning that drew on the proliferation of cultural identities that emerged and converged in the 1970s. If there were such a thing as collective consciousness enduring in the idea of telepathy, rather than an easy melding of minds,

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ed. Maurice Berger (Baltimore: University of Maryland Fine Arts Gallery, 1999), 22, 65, 53.

[136] Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 72.

[137] Schulman, *The Seventies,* 72.

[138] Schulman, *The Seventies*, xvi.

this would be a struggle, a sustained practice of becoming one's "opposite" that questioned new formations of identity. The seemingly passive subjectivity of the medium provided fertile ground for such an experiment, challenging masculinist notions of self-mastery while making room within the perceived borders self for alterity.

Telepathy in the Me Decade

In 1976, the figure of the medium surfaced in Rosalind Krauss's influential essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism." Krauss's article grappled with the relationship of the video apparatus to the artist's body and psyche, which so often appeared sandwiched between camera and monitor. She argued that the medium of video was not simply a question of technology. Rather, the new medium seemed to be constituted by narcissism, where the closed circuit encapsulates the artist and brackets out the rest of the world. Though her argument revolves around the psychoanalytic concept of narcissism, Krauss invoked the analogue of parapsychology in defining the medium of video as a psychological condition. "Everyday speech contains an example of the word 'medium' used in a psychological sense; the uncommon terrain for that common-enough usage is the world of parapsychology: telepathy, extra-sensory-perception, and communication with an after-life, for which people with certain kinds of psychic powers are understood to be Mediums."[139] For Krauss, drawing on Freud's lectures on telepathic dreams, the medium represented the temporal concurrence between message and human conduit: a figure of simultaneity akin to the instant feedback of video that she likened to the

[139] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* Vol. 1 (Spring 1976), 52.

narcissistic mirror. As Krauss argued, "video's real medium is a psychological condition, the very terms of which are to withdraw attention from an external object—an Other—and invest it in the Self."[140] However, in the overlapping realms of telepathy and the unconscious that historically troubled Freud, the line between self and other is not so evident.[141] Through her ability to channel others, the medium's subjectivity shatters the diagnosis of narcissism from within.

Some five years before Krauss's "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," which featured Jonas's 1972 video *Vertical Roll*, Jonas came up with her own definition of narcissism while developing *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*. As early as the fall of 1970, Jonas was thinking about ways to approach the mirror image: "water myths (narcissus, etc.)," she noted in her journal, "look in mirror + change disguise."[142] As Jonas's association of the act of regarding oneself in the mirror with a series of guises suggests, her understanding of narcissism involves the multiplication rather than consolidation of the ego. As she later wrote: "narcissism: there's three of me, they are later than I, they are past, they are what I just did, they are black + white selves, I am colored, one (little) two (middle) three (one)." Jonas seems to refer to her self-portrait in the video monitor, drawn on the following page, in which she, standing before the

[140] Krauss, "Aesthetics of Narcissism," 57.
[141] In 1921, Freud was invited to serve as a co-editor for three publications of occult research. Though he refused the invitations, he reportedly told one of the editors, "If I had my life to love over again I should devote myself to psychical research rather than psychoanalysis." (Freud later denied saying this). See Freud, "Psychoanalysis and Telepathy," (1941 [1921]), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, Volume XVIII (1920-1922) (London: Hogarth Press), 177, and Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 1.
[142] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated c. 1970)

camera, is divided into "three of me" (fig. 2.19). "I'm always trying to make more of me," Jonas noted a few pages later.[143]

In an article on Jonas's work written with Krauss in 1975, she (they?) wrote: "Narcissism was consciously explored in relation to the mirror and the video. Indoors, using masks and disguises, I played my image for what it was worth: fragmenting parts, seeing double, triple, halves, all in close-up."[144] Jacques Lacan theorized the formative role of the mirror in constituting individual subjectivity.[145] Yet rather than shoring up the ego, Jonas's technologized mirror described here splits her identity into two and even three. The changes of scale enabled by live video hooked up to the projection and monitor had the effect of multiplying Jonas's body within the apparatus while drawing the viewer into an intimate distance. Her multiplication through the mirrored portrait is recast when, during the performance, she attempted to smash her image in the mirror with a spoon. In the video version of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, Jonas uses a hammer instead and succeeds in breaking the mirror, a network of cracks fragmenting her face (fig. 2.20). Nearly a decade later, this image would be echoed by Barbara Kruger in a collaged photograph from 1981 that shows a woman looking into a shattered mirror covered with the words: "You are not yourself" (fig. 2.21). Here, the Lacanian mirror is smashed to feminist effect: questioning rather than reinforcing the subject.

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[143] Jonas Archive (Notebook 11, c. 1971)

[144] Jonas with Krauss, "Seven Years," 17.

[145] Drawing on Freud, Lacan posited the formative role of the mirror for identity in his theory of the "mirror stage." When an infant first glimpses themselves in a mirror, this external images of the body produces an understanding of "I"—an ego ideal to which the infant, who inhabits an unfinished sense of selfhood, will continually aspire. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 502-509. In "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," Krauss drew on another book by Lacan: *The Language of Self* (1968).

If telepathy questioned the limits of individual consciousness, it originally did so at the newly charted borders of the unconscious. As Thurschwell emphasizes, the scientific and wider cultural interest in "occult forms of intimacy and transmission" in the late nineteenth century were not only bound up with the emergence of modern telecommunications but also part and parcel of why, at this same historical moment, "psychoanalysis 'took.'"[146] Thurschwell argues that "psychoanalysis emerges from the same questions which mobilize psychical researchers," who were fascinated by new psychological conditions like hysteria and multiple personalities.[147] In his 1933 lecture "Dreams and Occultism," Freud reckoned with the similarity between telepathy and his own theory of thought-transference, which posited that "mental processes—ideas, emotional states, conative impulses" are transferred from one person to another without the use of language.[148] As Jacques Derrida wrote, psychoanalysis "resembles an adventure of modern rationality set on swallowing and simultaneously rejecting the foreign body named Telepathy, for assimilating it and vomiting it without being able to make up its mind to do one or the other."[149]

As it turns out, narcissism, which Freud diagnosed as arising when "libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego," raised the problem of telepathy.[150] In "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), Freud linked telepathy with narcissism to address the appearance of doubles, or doppelgängers, in Hoffmann's

[146] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 6.
[147] Thurschwell, *Magical Thinking*, 4, 15.
[148] Sigmund Freud, "Dreams and Occultism" (1933), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, Volume XXII (1932-1936) (London: Hogarth Press), 39.
[149] Derrida, "Telepathy," 38.
[150] Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism" (1914), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916) (London: Hogarth Press), 75.

fiction. If the double is an extension of the ego, it questions the integrity of the self through uncanny, even paranormal means. Beyond identical appearances, Hoffmann articulated the relationship between the self and its double as a telepathic one. As Freud wrote:

> This relationship is intensified by the spontaneous transmission of mental processes from one of these persons to the other—what we could call telepathy—so that the one becomes co-owner of the other's knowledge, emotions and experience. Moreover, a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other's self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged.[151]

As Freud argued in the following passage, the appearance of doppelgängers springs from the same forces that give rise to narcissism. "The double was originally an insurance against the extinction of the self," Freud wrote, arising from "the soil of boundless self-love" that feeds primary narcissism.[152] However, the double is a constant threat to the ego, as it recasts the self as "doubled, divided and interchanged."

"Difficult to imagine a theory of what they still call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy," Derrida remarked.[153] For Derrida, the intimate distance of telepathy inheres in self-presence, always potentially dividing ourselves from ourselves as we connect with one another: "Always difficult to imagine that one can think something to oneself, deep down inside, without being surprised by the other, without the other being

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[151] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (1919), trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003),141-142.
[152] Freud, *The Uncanny,* 142.
[153] Derrida, "Telepathy," 14.

immediately informed, as easily as if it had a giant screen in it, at the time of the talkies, with remote control [*télécommand*] for changing channels and fiddling with the colours, the speech dubbed with large letters in order to avoid any misunderstanding. For foreigners and deaf-mutes."[154] After looking at the performances and videos in this chapter, it is perhaps no surprise that Derrida characterizes the other laying in wait in the unconscious as appearing via a television screen. That the other's speech must be dubbed for "foreigners and deaf-mutes" signals that even as telepathy seems to overcome the distance between minds, it must still reckon with the difference between them.

Telepathy holds a particular relevance for the 1970s, as questions of identity were at stake in (and occluded by) the decade's association with narcissism. In an article for *New York* Magazine published in 1976, the journalist Tom Wolfe identified self-fashioning as a primary activity of what he called the "'Me' Decade."[155] Along with the rise of "*Me* movements" that splintered off from mainstream culture and public life—whether New Age or Born Again, black or grey panthers (a geriatric empowerment group)—according to Wolfe, the 1970s saw the democratization of an "alchemical dream" previously reserved for couriers: "changing one's personality—remaking, remodeling, elevating and polishing one's very *self*…and observing, studying, and doting on it. (Me!)"[156] The idea of telepathy might seem to be more at home in the mystical communalism and dreams of collective consciousness in the 1960s. Yet telepathy has unrecognized significance for questions of identity that emerged in the wake of the sixties counterculture as it seemed to splinter into what Christopher Lasch, in his bestselling

[154] Derrida, "Telepathy," 13-14.
[155] Tom Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening" [23 August 1976], *New York Magazine* http://nymag.com/news/features/45938/ n.p.
[156] Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening," n.p.

1979 book, called "the culture of narcissism."[157] This is signaled in part by Organic Honey's "pseudo-psychedelic" ring, as one critic put it, as her earthy and whimsical alias (inspired by a jar of honey) recalls the names assumed by flower children that announced a birth (or rebirth) into a community outside dominant culture, one in tune with the natural world and free of societal norms.[158] "'Organic Honey' would be a cool drag name today," Johanna Fateman has observed. "And in the early 1970s, Joan Jonas's performance alias must have been gratifying to her peers—an inspired jab at countercultural pretensions and gender roles, a sardonic and playful recasting of the narcissistic hippie chick as Porta-Pak Conceptualist."[159]

The idea of telepathy mediates between the dream of collective consciousness and the struggle that would be come to be called the politics of identity. As it was variously invoked by women artists in the 1970s, who also explored subjectivity of the medium through acts of possession (and dispossession), rather than occult hokum or a countercultural pipedream, telepathy became a productive mode of mediated performance that interrogated how an earlier dream of collective identity failed to account for difference, which was then perceived as narcissism. The not fully present subjectivity of the telepathic medium offered a critique of the self-mastering subject—a feminist significance engaged by Schneemann and Hiller. Taken up by Jonas, the medium's lack of self-possession enabled an exploration of otherness within the ostensible confines of the individual psyche. Along with Piper's Mythic Being, Jonas's Organic Honey

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[157] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Warner Books, 1979).
[158] Richard Burgin, "Nude in museum was alive, and kicking!" *Boston Globe* (February 7, 1974), 19.
[159] Johanna Fateman, "Notes on Vamp," *Artforum* (Summer 2015), 316.

represents a form of occult self-fashioning that resisted the narcissism and individualism that is the perceived legacy of 1970s—a legacy used precisely to discredit feminism.[160]

[160] For Wolfe, Women's Liberation, for instance, was so much egotistical drama derived from an overinvestment in the personal: "One's very existence as a woman—as Me—becomes something all the world analyzes, agonizes over." This backlash against the feminist insistence that personal is political manifested in studies by Lasch and others, which, as Gayatri Spivak noticed in the early 1990s, seemed to blame women for a "culture of narcissism" ("Yet Narcissus was a boy!"). Gayatri Spivak, "Echo," *New Literary History* 24 (Winter 1993), 17.

"Listening for each other, even though we are at a distance."

– Maryanne Amacher[1]

In the summer of 1973, Jonas enlisted Bill MacDougal, a young Cape Bretoner with a bagpipe, to make a video. Recorded in Nova Scotia, *Three Returns* consists of three landscapes framed by the stationary camera that are traversed by the boy playing his bagpipe (fig. 3.1). In each scene there is an open pasture that stretches toward the horizon, dotted with a few sheep. MacDougal begins playing right beside or behind the camera and proceeds to march into the distance. As his slight figure recedes into the field of view, the reedy wail of the bagpipe diminishes as he makes his way toward the horizon. The sheep scatter. At some indeterminate point in the distance, he turns around and begins his "return," the sound welling as he approaches the camera. The ritual is repeated then in a new landscape. MacDougal begins a new marching song, the tune interacting with the particular terrain as he traverses its depth.

As Liza Béar and Lizzie Borden wrote in their description of *Three Returns*, the boy's "walking reveals the topography of the land, which is difficult to read in a static panorama."[2] In this sense *Three Returns* recalls *Delay Delay*, Jonas's outdoor performance of the previous year, in which the phenomenon of sound delay added depth

[1] Maryanne Amacher, "Intermedia Sound," Press Release, March 27, 1972. The Kitchen, New York. The Kitchen Archives, Getty Research Institute. 2014.M.6, Box 76, Folder 10.

[2] Liza Béar and Lizzie Borden, "Three Returns 1973," in in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968-1982*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: The University Art Museum, University of California in association with The Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 132.

and a degree of measurement to the landscape otherwise flattened by distance. As performers clapped wooden blocks in wide overhead arcs, the audience heard the sounds after they saw the claps, the interval between sound and sight varying depending on the different locations of the performers. *Three Returns* is similarly "concerned with the perception of sound and images as their distance from the viewer changes."[3] In both *Three Returns* and *Delay Delay*, sound conveyed over a distance offers a sense of space.

Jonas began spending summers on Cape Breton Island in 1970, then a remote outpost (and still a considerable trip) from her home in New York City. "This is the first time in my life I have been so *physically* alone—In NY there is the phone,"[4] she wrote in her journal while staying on the island. As Jonas recalls, in the 1970s there was a single phone one could use in a bar in Inverness, the town in which she still lives.[5] Cape Breton offered a landscape imbued with distance not only because of its expansive views formed by the way the highlands precipitously slide into the ocean, but also because its remoteness from the geography and pace of a contemporary urban existence. MacDougal's bagpipe, for instance, is an aural lifeline to an old Scottish immigrant culture on the island. In the absence of the artificial proximity of the phone, Jonas listened for different kind of telephony of sounds traveling over a distance.

During the summer that she recorded *Three Returns*, Jonas described other ideas for pieces dealing with sound in the landscape. While the dancer Simone Forti was staying with her in Inverness, Jonas jotted notes about making a potential "Echoe Piece" with Forti. The performance would involve people passing along sound outside and swinging a bullroarer, with Jonas recording this enigmatic communicative action from a

[3] Béar and Borden, "Three Returns 1973," 132.
[4] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976)
[5] Joan Jonas, in conversation with the author, August 10, 2017.

low angle.[6] Though this piece never materialized, on the following page of her journal she mentions a scene—"Simone + dogs barking + car"—that she did make into a videotape that summer titled *Barking* (1973). In the video, a dog barks into the distance beside a car parked at Jonas's house. "She's still barking," Forti says off screen, before entering the frame, where she pets the dog and looks out in the direction that the dog is barking. The camera pans the landscape, as if to see what the dog has seen off in the distance, revealing nothing but trees, field, and sky. Jonas would eventually include *Barking* in *Funnel*, a performance that premiered at The Kitchen in New York the following year. The set for *Funnel* was based on the form of the cone: its recessed shape recreating the diminishing deep landscape traversed by MacDougal. Jonas also used cones in the performance: large funnels constructed from tin or paper that, like a megaphone, could be used to amplify and direct sound (fig. 3.2). Akin to MacDougal's bagpipe, the cones were portable devices for conveying sound over a distance. Jonas referred to the prop, which she would use in multiple performances and videos of the mid-1970s, in the pages of her Nova Scotia journal in which she described the echoing pieces with Forti. "Cones," Jonas noted: "Linda + I answering someone far away directing sounds." [7]

Sound has always been a key element of Jonas's practice. "My work closer to music," Jonas reflected in her notes from around 1974. "What sounds do I want in my work," she wrote.[8] Later that year Jonas encouraged herself to write about her work using "musical terms": "augmentation, modulation."[9] She has since emphasized the impact of

[6] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1973-1974)
[7] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1973-1974)
[8] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1973-1974).
[9] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1974).

experimental music on her and her work since the mid-1960s. As she expressed to Grace Glueck, "I was very affected by all the minimalist composers: La Monte Young, I loved his music; Phil Glass; Steve Reich, Terry Riley. Then I worked with composers: Alvin Lucier, Alvin Curran."[10] "Hearing my first La Monte Young piece was a major experience for me," Jonas told Hans Ulrich Obrist, "—to hear that very abstract and non-linear sound hovering in space."[11] If the way that Young's drones pervaded the spatial surroundings of the performance made an impression on Jonas, the structure of works by other minimalist composers affected how she put together her own pieces. "Then there was the work of Glass and Reich, with their very mathematical structures"—structures that, she noted, she could relate to her own work: "I often thought of my early work as if it were music, an intuitive assemblage of elements rather than a story."[12] Even as Jonas began working with narrative in the late 1970s, sound remained a key element of her practice. "Sound is very important in my work," she told Obrist, "and I construct the soundtracks myself."[13] Jonas has since collaborated on her performance and video soundtracks with composers: Richard Teitelbaum for *Double Lunar Dogs* (1984), Alvin Lucier for *Volcano Saga* (1985), and Alvin Curran for *Variations on a Scene* (1993). While Teitelbaum and Lucier composed pieces for Jonas's videos and performances, Curran also performed with Jonas in *Variations on a Scene,* playing a shofar (a horn instrument) on a boat in the distance while Jonas yelled into a microphone.[14] Jonas has since developed a number of her recent performances with the jazz pianist and composer

[10] Joan Jonas, interview by Grace Glueck, 2009, transcript, Elizabeth Murray Women in the Visual Arts Oral History Project, Columbia University, New York, NY, 36.
[11] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, in *Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews, Vol. 2*, ed. Charles Arsène-Henry, Shumon Basar, and Karen Mara (Charta, 2003), 389.
[12] Jonas with Obrist, 389.
[13] Jonas with Obrist, 389.
[14] Jonas, "Sound," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 483.

Jason Moran, who, somewhat astonishingly, referred to Jonas as the best percussionist he has ever worked with.[15]

Reflecting Jonas's engagement with sound at the intersection of video and performance, music was a key ingredient in the emergence of performance and video art in the 1970s. As Holly Rodgers has observed, video's audio substrate allowed for its intermedial quality. "As its most basic, it is an audio technology able to simultaneously record (and project) music and image; at its more complex, performative level, it can synergistically unite many other disciplines, such as music, painting, sculpture, poetry, dance, and other forms of performance."[16] By the early 1970s, the ability to generate and process video images in real time immediately connected the technology with electronic music performance. Like video, audio synthesizers developed in the mid-1960s enabled the manipulation of electronic signal in real time (and like videotape, this signal may be magnetized and stored on audiotape). Musicians such as Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman, Steina Vasulka (with her husband Woody), and Laurie Spiegel took up video as a mode of performance as they manipulated audiovisual signal to generate images and sound before live audiences. (Between 1969 and 1971, Paik constructed a video synthesizer with Shuya Abe that could process seven different sources in real time). Composed of the constant flow of signal processed in real time that can be stabilized, but never stilled, electronic imagery dovetailed with the present tense of performance. As Yvonne Spielmann has written, "video produces an image that is constantly undergoing

[15] "Joan Jonas and Jason Moran," lecture-demonstration at Columbia University School of the Arts, November 15, 2015. Jonas has collaborated with Moran on *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things* (2005), *Reading Dante* (2007-2010), *Reanimation* (2010-2012), and *They Come to Us without a Word* (2015).
[16] Holly Rodgers, *Sounding the Gallery: Video and the Rise of Art-Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 76.

transformation."[17] For Spielmann, works by the Vasulkas in the 1970s, for instance, constituted a form of "video-performance" as they bound together live music with electronic image making as an interactive, real time process.[18]

In Jonas's videos and performances of the same period, sound would have a different relationship to electronic technology. If the telephone is a device that conveys sound from one point across a distance to another, seeming to collapse that space through instantaneous transmission, the auditory elements of Jonas's work always restore a sense of distance, as in *Three Returns*. In this sense her engagement with sound is in dialogue with other artists and composers at the time who took up telephonic sound in concrete and expanded ways. In 1969, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago organized "Art by Telephone," an exhibition in which artists phoned in instructions for their artworks from afar. The exhibition was dedicated to Marcel Duchamp and to John Cage, who declined to participate. Three years earlier, however, Cage had composed a piece that involved telephone lines. In *Variations VII,* performed with Cecil Cooker and David Tudor at *9 Evenings* in 1966, Cage mixed and manipulated over fifty sound sources, including ten telephone lines open to diverse sites around New York City, such as the Bronx Zoo Aviary, The New York Times press room, the ASPCA lost dog kennel, and Merce Cunningham's dance studio.[19] Also in 1966, Max Neuhaus installed ten telephones at a radio station for his piece *Public Supply*. When people telephoned into the station, the calls registered with a semi-automated system which Neuhaus then mixed

[17] Yvonne Spielmann, "Video: From Technology to Medium," *Art Journal* 65, no. 3 (Fall 2006), 58.
[18] Yvonne Spielmann, "Video and Computer: The Aesthetics of Steina and Woody Vasulka" http://www.fondation-langlois.org/html/e/page.php?NumPage=463.
[19] Catherine Morris, "*9 evenings*: an experimental proposition (allowing for discontinuities)," in *9 Evenings Reconsidered: Art, Theatre, and Engineering, 1966*, ed. Morris (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 10.

over the airwaves.[20] The following year, Maryanne Amacher began a sustained engagement with what she called "long distance music" by setting up a high-frequency telephone links between two remote locations, so the environmental sounds of one place could be heard in another. Extending his idea of facilitating a global "intercom" through his networked *Movie-Dromes*, Stan VanDerBeek incorporated telephones into *Violence Sonata*, a program that aired on WGBH in 1969, which the audience was able to call in responses to the question, "can man communicate?"[21] Keith Sonnier's 1975 *L.A.-N.Y. Hook-Up* did not use a telephone, but connected "two amplified spaces" (rooms equipped with loudspeakers) in New York and Los Angeles, so people could interact with one another in a more ambient way at a distance.[22]

Rather than through electronic telephony, Jonas engaged the telephone as a technology of presence in the form of her cones: devices that similarly transmitted the voice and other sounds over a distance. (Originally, the telephone was not solely used to convey the individual voice, but transmitted other broadcasts such as musical performance as "theatrophones").[23] As Jonas has said, "the cone was an instrument to channel sound to the audience. I could whisper in their ears, look through it, listen to it,

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[20] Max Neuhaus interviewed by William Duckworth, *Max Neuhaus: Sound Works*, vol. 1, *Inscription* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Cantz, 1994). http://www.max-neuhaus.info/bibliography/

[21] Stan VanDerBeek, ""*Culture: Intercom" and Expanded Cinema*: A Proposal and Manifesto", *Film Culture* 40 (Spring 1966): 15-18; VanDerBeek, "Violence Sonata," in *The New Television: A Public/Private Art*, ed. Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974).

[22] Keith Sonnier with Betsy Sussler, "Aesthesipol," *BOMB*, No.3 (1982), 29.

[23] Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies were New: Thinking About Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 210-214.

yell through it, sing—always directing sound to a place."[24] As Andrea Lissoni has observed, "the conical form is used as both a megaphone through which to amplify sound, and as a telescope turned both to herself and to the audience."[25] Jonas did use the cone as an audiovisual device. "I whispered, sang, yelled into both ends," she has remarked: "I looked through it and listened to it."[26] Yet rather than the telescope, this chapter continues a media archaeology of telepresence through the earliest telephones and, in particular, the related device of the megaphone. Like Jonas's sculptural conical props, these early phones extended the body in space. Yet unlike Marshall McLuhan's notion of media as "extensions of man" that would interweave to form a field of simultaneous relations he dubbed "auditory space," these telephonic devices amplified bodily difference in a discordant public space, contesting its idealization and collapsibility.

The Extensions of Woman

In his 1964 book *Understating Media: The Extensions of Man*, McLuhan theorized media as extensions of the human body. "During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space," McLuhan wrote. "Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global

[24] Joan Jonas, "Closing Statement," in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968-1982*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: The University Art Museum, University of California in association with The Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 137.
[25] Andrea Lissoni, "Introduction" in *Light Time Tales*, ed. Lissoni (Milan: Hangar Bicocca, 2014), 11.
[26] Joan Jonas, "My New Theater I: Tap Dancing," *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas*, Joan Jonas and Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015), 354.

embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned."[27] While McLuhan understood devices of the mechanical age as extending various parts of the body, the defining characteristic of electronic media, for him, was this extension of the nervous system:

> With the telegraph Western man began a process of putting his nerves outside his body. Previous technologies had been extensions of physical organs: the wheel is a putting outside ourselves of the feet, the city wall is a collective *outering* of the skin. But electronic media are, instead, extensions of the central nervous system, an inclusive and simultaneous field.[28]

Despite the vulnerability wrought by this extension of the nervous system ("the electronic age endures a total uneasiness, as of a man wearing his skull inside and his brain outside"), McLuhan described a process of disembodiment that is still embedded in understanding teletechnologies: those long-distance electronic media that seem to generate an so-called "global embrace" that annihilates "both space and time."

McLuhan's notion of sensory extension had a telephonic resonance, undergirding his vision of a cocoon-like network of instantaneous *auditory* connection: "We are *enveloped* by sound," he wrote in *The Medium is the Massage*. "It forms a seamless web around us."[29] Electronic media, McLuhan conjectured, caused a break with the "a one-thing-at-a-time awareness" of a fragmented and linear culture based on the written word,

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[27] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964) (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 3.
[28] Marshall McLuhan, "The Agenbite of Outwit" (1963). *Media Research: Technology, Art, Communication,* ed. Michel A. Moos (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1997), 121.
[29] Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), n.p.

generating an "auditory space" characterized by possibilities of instantaneous communication: "that sphere of simultaneous relations created by the act of hearing."[30] "That the world of sound is essentially a unified field of instant relationships lends it a near resemblance to the world of electromagnetic waves," he wrote.[31] In McLuhan's vision, electronic media are instantaneous and globalized, yielding a space that is without the delays and differences inherent to distance: "an inclusive and simultaneous field." In this understanding of the world unified by electronic media, space is effectively eliminated as information forms instantaneously on a global scale with seeming disregard for geographic distance. As the delays and dislocations of space fall away, McLuhan's globe is wrapped in the fantasy of total presence: an "orchestral, resonating unity."[32] This idea of the extension of the nervous system that would generate a unified field of simultaneous relations does away with both the disparities of distance and bodies that might disrupt "communication as a seamless act" facilitated by electricity.

McLuhan's articulation of the body and media through sensory extension evokes how, when it first became available in the late nineteenth century as a new mode of presence at a distance in 1875, the electric telephone immediately raised the problem of embodiment. The phone inaugurated the disembodied voice, yet it was also deeply associated with the body and the intimacy of point-to-point contact. In contrast to radio, which likewise conveyed sound at a distance, the telephone engaged the fantasy of

[30] McLuhan, "The Agenbite of Outwit," 123. For a discussion of the artistic and critical reception of McLuhan's notion of "auditory space" see Branden W. Joseph, "'My Mind Split Open': Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable," *Grey Room* 8 (Summer 2002): 80-107. As Joseph writes, television was actually the medium that most closely aligned with auditory space. Joseph also points to the Eamses' *Think* installation at the IBM Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair as a key manifestation of McLuhan's ideas.
[31] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 275.
[32] McLuhan, "The Agenbite of Outwit," 124.

reaching out and touching someone across geographic divides. "In the dawn of telephone systems," John Durham Peters has written, "the personal touch was omnipresent," as each call was placed by a human operator before the use of numbers.[33] Yet in order to achieve "vocal immediacy across distances," the telephone enacted a startling disembodiment.[34] "To talk on the telephone is to identify an acoustic effigy of the person with an embodied presence," Peters observes.[35] The telephone is a technology that negotiates this possibility of absent presence and staying in touch at a distance (hence the necessity of phone etiquette—"connection management in a medium that cloaks presence.")[36]

As it disturbed traditional experiences of embodiment and intimate connection, the early telephone was instantly associated with another technology of presence: telepathy. Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson, the inventors of the first successful electric phone, for instance, had a demonstrated interest in the occult (Watson was a member of the Society for Psychical Research).[37] Their early demos of the telephone were modeled on séances. "New machines for talking to distant selves evoked ideas of haunting," Jill Galvan observes. Early users of the telephone described the humming on the line as the moans of spirits and likened calls to hearing a "voice from

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[33] John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 195.
[34] Robert Hopper, *Telephone Conversation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 29.
[35] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air*, 228.
[36] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air,* 197. "Without access to the bodily presence of the other," Peters writes, "[n]egotiations of identity became routine in telephone etiquette."
[37] Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology—Schizophrenia—Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 246-248, 260.

another world."[38] Such paranormal conditions surrounding new possibilities of speaking over a distance found their way into McLuhan's theorizations. "With the telephone," McLuhan wrote in *Understanding Media*, "there occurs the extension of ear and voice that is a kind of extra sensory perception."[39] As referenced in Chapter Two, McLuhan would later describe how this outering and transportation of audition as "a kind of extra sensory perception" contributed to a kind of global telepathy: "the new society will be one of mythic integration, a resonating world akin to the old tribal echo chamber where magic will live again: a world of ESP."[40] This "resonating world" of instantaneous telepathic relations is in keeping with McLuhan's notion of auditory space as a global field of simultaneous connection.

As the early link between Spiritualism and telephony suggests, as with telepathy, gender had a considerable role to play in the emergence of the electric telephone. By 1904, Bell Telephone was the largest employer of women of the early twentieth century.[41] Galvan argues that the prevalence of female telephone switchboard operators corresponds to the qualities sought in spirit mediums. "The operator's full heart and outreached hands embodied the premium quality she brought to her work: sensitivity or sympathy, gendered feminine by the early twentieth century, and marking out the operator as one of a larger class of mediating women" that spanned technological and occult forms of "human-mediated exchange."[42] Peters has likewise observed that "[l]ike

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[38] Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, The Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 8.
[39] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 265.
[40] "Interview: Marshall McLuhan," *Playboy* (1969), 72.
[41] Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium,* 5.
[42] Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium,* 27, 12. The sensitivity of the telephone operator was accented by a desired quality of politeness ostensibly innate not simply to all women, but women of a certain class. As Galvan writes, "a feminine ethic of personal care was

spiritualist mediums, operators inhabit a profoundly liminal space. The female body hidden at the heart of a national telecommunications network, appearing only in impersonal voice, is an archetypal figure […] She was always betwixt and between."[43] For Galvan, this betwixt and betweeness relies on the essential sensitivity "often imagined as the product of women's delicate nervous systems," which "posited the medium's ability to reach out feelingly to others and thus to facilitate networks of communication" and also "presumed that such self-extension would *only* be a matter of feeling."[44] Here is the prototypical instance of the extension of the human nervous system by electronic media claimed by McLuhan. Though McLuhan repeatedly invoked women in relation to the telephone—a technology that, he wrote, would replace the prostitute with the call girl—what is repressed by his account is this teletechnological function of the female nervous system.[45]

Telephonic devices were in fact used during séances in the form of hearing and speaking trumpets (fig. 3.3). Hillel Schwartz has noted how mediums "sometimes used

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crucial to the image the Bell System sought to cultivate in its operators in the early decades of the telephone industry. In a policy that was simultaneously gender-, class-, and race-based, managers hired only white, genteel, and virtuous young women who would be attentive to callers' preferences and moods" (27).

[43] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air,* 196.

[44] Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium,* 12.

[45] It is perhaps no surprise then that McLuhan immediately associates the telephone with women: he relates a tidbit from the memoir of Jack Paar: "He tells how he got a call from a woman who said she was so lonesome she had been taking a bath three times a day in hopes that the phone would ring." He notes how with the "French phone," which combined mouth and earpiece into a single device, the "language of love" entered the phone "because it unites the voice and the ear in a particularly close way" ("it is quite natural to kiss via phone," he notes), before going on to speculate that the telephone would full supplant the prostitute with the call girl. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 265-266.

brass ear trumpets as otherworldly speakers."[46] "Séance trumpets were not like musical trumpets," George Noory and Rosemary Ellen Guiley have described. "They were more like megaphones."[47] Long and conical, these trumpets for speaking and hearing were typically made out of tin, aluminum, or cardboard. By holding the small end of the megaphone to their ear, participants in a séance would reportedly hear spirit whispers. To facilitate this communication, the medium would hold her hand over the other end of the trumpet, conducting and amplifying the voices of the spirits. Like telephones, these spirit trumpets made distant voices present. Echoing the extension of her nervous system that would undergird telephone networks, the medium's body imbued the spirit trumpets with their mediating power as she placed her hand over the end to amplify distant voices. Turned the other way around, the small end of the trumpet was also placed directly onto the medium's larynx, presumably to facilitate a two-way conversation with the spirit realm.[48] Used this way, the trumpets possessed a provocative resemblance to the megaphones used to direct, amplify, and publicize female voices during women's rights demonstrations beginning in the late nineteenth century.

Particularly as they were wielded by female mediums, the trumpets used to amplify the messages whispered from the spirit world modeled bodily extension differently than the mediating women at the heart of communications networks. The large cones used in séances indicate a counter-narrative of media as extensions of the body, in which the female voice is re-projected from the sinews of long-distance networks into public space. This history begins not with the electric telephone, which appeared to

[46] Hillel Schwartz, *Making Noise: From Babel to the Big Bang and Beyond* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 229.
[47] George Noory and Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *Talking to the Dead* (New York: Forge Books, 2011), 71.
[48] Noory and Guiley, *Talking to the Dead,* 72.

collapse distance—announced, for instance, in the title of Catherine McKenzie's biography, *Alexander Graham Bell: The Man Who Contracted Space*—contributing to the "auditory space" that McLuhan envisioned as a new milieu of global connectivity. Rather, the cones used by nineteenth century mediums and engaged by Jonas invoke earlier telephones in the form of speaking and hearing trumpets. These instruments represent an alternative model of corporeal extension that, rather than purporting to transcend its confines of the body, indicates its varied limitations. Portable yet sculptural bodily supplements, these devices unsettle imperatives of immediacy, miniaturization, and transparency that have been ascribed to more dominant teletechnologies.

Tele Cones

Throughout the mid-1970s, the cone was a key motif in Jonas's performances and videos. Populating the stages of *Funnel* (1974), *Crepusculo* (1974), *Twilight* (1975), *Mirage* (1976) and *The Juniper Tree* (1976) and featured in the videos *Merlo* (1974) and *I Want to Live in the Country (and Other Romances)* (1976), the cones oscillated between sculptural set pieces and props. "One of the reasons I switched from sculpture to performance was because I could include sound in my work," Jonas has said.[49] Fashioned from paper or tin, the cones were devices that facilitated this transition from sculpture to sound as Jonas activated them through performance. The cone is an audiovisual prop: both geometric form and a shaper of perception as it conducts sound through space. As

[49] Joan Jonas, "Sound," *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 482. Jonas's installation at 112 Green Street included two circles tall cones, one set made of paper and the other set made of metal, along with a monitor playing her video *May Windows* (also 1976).

Jonas remarked, "It's a beautiful form, and it's also functional."[50] On the one hand, as an elementary form, the cone is a minimalist object that Jonas activated through performance, elaborating the embodied encounter with such objects that the critic Michael Fried decried as theatrical. On the other hand, as a functional device, the cone also mediates the space surrounding sculptural objects. The way that Jonas *used* the otherwise abstract form invokes its role as a teletechnology: namely, the cone's function as a device for transmitting and amplifying sound at a distance. The media archaeology of this form as a prosthetic supplement and protest device intervenes in what Frazer Ward has critiqued as the neutral public space staked by minimalist sculptors.[51] Moreover, as both a sculptural prop and media device that extends the body of its user, Jonas's cones resist McLuhan's notion of auditory space as instantaneously cohesive and collapsible by restoring physical distance and corporeal difference.

Jonas's cones first appeared in *Funnel*, which she performed at the Kitchen in 1974 (fig. 3.4). As the title suggests, "*Funnel* was based on the form of a cone."[52] The set itself was modeled after this form: using white paper walls and a series of curtains, Jonas constructed a conical space that opened toward the audience and receded toward the back of the room. The set contained a number of large paper cones that echoed the shape of the set. As Jonas described it, the "[s]ize and placement of cones defined a scale that continuously changed. They were used as props; as instruments they augmented sound,

[50] Joan Jonas in Ingrid Schaffner, "Conversation with Joan Jonas," *Joan Jonas: They Come to Us Without a Word*, ed. Jane Farver (Cambridge, New York, and Ostfildern: MIT List Visual Arts Center, Gregory R. Miller & Co., Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2015), 116.
[51] Frazer Ward, *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012).
[52] Joan Jonas, "Closing Statement," in *Scripts and Descriptions,* 137.

focused it, and directed it across the space."[53] Jonas also incorporated closed circuit video into the performance so that some of her actions were captured on a live feed. The audience could compare two views of the same space: one marked by physical depth, the other a flattened, and occasionally solarized, electronic image.

In the foreground of the space, there was a three-foot high cone beside a video monitor and a child's desk where Jonas sat at the outset of the performance (fig. 3.5). After pulling a white rabbit from her white satin sleeve, she took a drawing of a cone on a square of white satin from the desk and showed it to the audience. She then rang a bell and activated the sculptural paper cone beside her by singing a Cajun melody through it, "turning in various directions to project the sound toward different parts of the space" ("Plaintive Cajun tune fading in and out as cone moves").[54] As Jonas turned, Babette Mangolte aimed her camera at the opening of the cone and gradually zoomed in so that a close up of the circle inside of the cone appears on the video monitor, echoing the shape of the set.

Later on in the piece, Jonas used the cone and other props in an interactive segment with the audience. Spectators were asked to submit bits of advice before the performance began. Toward the close of *Funnel*, a "man's voice from behind paper walls reads anonymous advice to the performer…Hearing the advice for the first time, Jonas improvises, waits for another piece of advice, again improvises, etc." Jonas performed in response to the advice with elements from the set as the camera improvised along with her, so that "[s]inging, talking through cones, bits of recorded music, sounds of objects,

[53] Joan Jonas with Rosalind Krauss, "Seven Years," *TDR/The Drama Review* Vol. 19 No. 1 (March 1975), 16.
[54] Jonas, "Funnel," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 61.

etc." were audible. Jonas also addressed spectators directly, inviting them to join in.[55] Here, the large cones mediated between more abstract audiovisual perception and two-way communication inflected by distance: both within the exaggerated recession of the set and across the divide between performance and audience.

Cones continued to appear in nearly all of Jonas's pieces in the second half of the 1970s. During a trip to Italy in 1974, Jonas staged a performance in an English garden beside the tower of Santo Spirito. *Crepusculo* took place at dusk, so that the light faded over the course of the performance. In keeping with the progressively diminished visibility, much of the performance, which included tableaux set to live and recorded music, could not be seen, only intermittently heard. The audience stood against a nearby house while three performers disappeared into the garden carrying large paper funnels. Dispersed within the foliage, the performers were often invisible to the audience, so that the sounds they made through the cones offered a sense of the terrain in the fading light. The performers were also occasionally invisible to one another. In one scene, "[h]idden from each other in garden hedges, two performers gossip about a common friend through ten-foot white paper cones. Their talk is projected through the cones to the audience in varying degrees of audibility, depending on the back-and-forth movement of the cones."[56] With their elongated speaking trumpets, the performers engaged in the intimate conversation at a distance. Even as the funnels projected the performers' voices to one another and to the audience farther away, the lengthy instruments kept the performers at a spatial remove from one another. At the same time, as the conical props channeled the voices, they also limited access to the gossip depending on where the sound was directed.

[55] Jonas, "Funnel," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 64.
[56] Jonas, "Crepusculo," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 40.

While in Florence in 1974, Jonas again used the cone in *Merlo*, a video produced by Art/Tapes/22. "*Merlo*, the Italian word for blackbird, is about the perception of image and sound over varying distances."[57] Here, rather than signaling to performers as she did in the outdoor performances, Jonas, dressed in a winglike Afghani covering, or chadri, made sounds through a long white cone as the camera located her at various distances (fig. 3.6). "Cloaked in a dark, hooded robe, Jonas employs a long paper cone as a megaphone, singing melodies and keening, animal-like, into the landscape."[58] The opening sequence finds Jonas walking around a dirt excavation, humming through the cone. The camera is positioned on one of the dirt walls above; Jonas ascends and directs the cone at the camera so that the humming is more audible as the circumference of the prop fills the frame. The scene then cuts to another where Jonas appears on flat ground, closer to the camera. The camera observes her as she slowly turns while holding the cone to her mouth, howling like a dog through it. In the next scene, Jonas appears across a lake, where she uses the cone to call "merlo," barely audibly, over the water.

Morphologically paired with volcanoes exploding on the big screen, cones would reappear in Jonas's performance *Mirage*, which premiered at Anthology Film Archives in 1976 (fig. 3.7). In addition to continuing to incorporate television monitors that showed closed circuit feeds and prerecorded video, Jonas utilized the film screen, the size and shape of which could be changed in real time through the manipulation of curtains. She included two black and white films in the performance: one comprised of stock news footage of volcanoes exploding and the other a series of shots of Jonas drawing and erasing different images on a chalkboard. The performers occupied a small stage in front

[57] Béar and Borden, "Merlo 1974," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 133.
[58] "Merlo, Joan Jonas," Electronic Arts Intermix, https://www.eai.org/titles/merlo

of the screen, which Jonas also treated as a scrim that could be backlit. A collection of tall cones were installed behind the screen, the looming forms of which could be periodically glimpsed along with shadowy performers backstage when the projection screen was lit from behind. In addition to film, Jonas included another additional media format in *Mirage*: audiotape.

In her review of *Mirage* (then titled *Mirage of Phantom Knot*) for the *Soho Weekly New*s in 1976, Ingrid Wiegand noted the emphasis on sound in the performance as a continued interest for Jonas. "*Mirage* relied heavily on sound—on horse whispers and angry shouts into long metal cones, on song, on dogs barking, on video works that created ambiguous image spaces, sometimes by using vertical roll, on Jonas herself, making gestures, performing acts and assuming body postures full of unarticulated significance."[59] "Like a number of Jonas' recent pieces," Wiegand wrote, "*Mirage* involves the use of long, slender cones, both as visual elements and for directing, amplifying and modulating sound."[60] Linking "ambiguous image spaces" with actions on stage, the tin and paper cones used as props in *Mirage* had several mediating roles: between performers, between performers and audience, and between Jonas and herself. The content directed, amplified, and modulated through the cones included conversation but also ethnographic material: folksongs and foreign tape recordings funneled around the performance space as through an exaggerated phonograph horn.

Following the sparse wooden claps of the outdoor pieces, Jonas' later performances often included music: she included a Reggae song in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, for instance, and circus music in *Funnel*, which was played through

[59] Ingrid Wiegand, "Unmasking: Mirage of Phantom Knot," *Soho Weekly News* (May 27, 1976), n.p.
[60] Wiegand, "Unmasking," n.p.

speakers that were slightly out of sync. Jonas continued to script sound recording technology into *Mirage*. The performance began with a tape recorder and a television monitor switching on. To the left of the stage, the monitor, turned on its side, displayed the image of large sunlit windows. Meanwhile, a recording of Jonas and Lois Lane signing "Fatal Flower Garden," a song that Jonas had heard on Harry Smith's Folkways compilation, echoed through the theater. Then the voices of two women—Jonas and Christine Patoski, who also performed in *Mirage*—could be heard from behind the projection screen. As the script reads: "Two women hiding behind screen argue through cones and laugh. As performance develops it becomes evident that one woman is the shadow figure of the other, operating mostly behind the scene."[61] This shadowing effect was amplified when a light was switched on behind the projection screen, illuminating Patoski like a shadow puppet amongst a field of cones standing on end.

Akin to Jonas and her alter ego Organic Honey, the doubling of the performers in *Mirage* corresponded to a sequence where Jonas appears to communicate with herself. Wiegand observed that the earlier backstage quarrel between Jonas and Patoski was later echoed when Jonas took up "a cone again in a similar 'argument' with herself, rushing intensely from one end to the other, as if to catch the full impact of her own accusations and imprecations against herself."[62] The critic Don McDonagh had the same idea. "A tape-recorded and unseen wrangle was translated into a solo in which Miss Jonas took both parts, alternately speaking into one end of a large narrow, metal cone and then the other with a retort," he wrote in his review of *Mirage*.[63] For McDonagh, the backstage

[61] Jonas, "Mirage," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 71.
[62] Wiegand, "Unmasking," n.p.
[63] Don McDonagh, "Delia Peters Beguiling in 'Dances at a Gathering,'" *The New York Times* (May 25, 1976).

"wrangle" appeared tape-recorded, as the voices of the invisible performers appeared to be disembodied. The voices were mediated in a different manner: distanced and distorted through cones that later facilitated Jonas's self-argument. "Suddenly Jonas begins running from the large end of the cone to the small end, picking it up, yelling into it, dropping it, etc." (Jonas had used the cone as a two-sided instrument earlier in the performance, as the script describes: "Laughs insanely through large end of cone. Blows through small end.")[64] Recalling the intimate distance of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, the cone allowed Jonas to invite a sense of distance into her presence on stage. This sense of spacing was manifested as she ran from one end of the cone to the other, as if in time with the sound traveling through the elongated cone.

Jonas elaborated this sense of distance within the self by reappearing on stage wearing a nineteenth century Mexican mask. Placing the mask on the edge of the stage, she again picked up the long tin cone, this time using the prop as an imaginary oar. As the script reads, Jonas ceases "rowing and looks through cone held like a telescope," before donning the mask and gazing out at the audience. "Another performer appears carrying small tape recorder, picks up small end of cone and places recorder against it, while Jonas, still masked, directs large end to various parts of the space. The two dance a two-step while moving the taped music around the performance space." Depending on where one was sitting, the "[f]aint sound of man singing Mayan song" could be heard as it was funneled across the space.[65] As Jonas trained the cone toward the audience, the way the sound was shaped and "telescoped" across the divide between performance and audience became palpable. This sense of distance applied to the content of the tape. Rather than

[64] Jonas, "Mirage," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 71.
[65] Jonas, "Mirage," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 75.

hearing a high fidelity recording that would bring them closer to the original source of the music, the audience perceived a pronounced texture of distance as the song was physically framed and transmitted to different areas of the theater. "The cones used in *Mirage* are made from galvanized tin," Wiegand described, "so that they alter the timbre of sounds made into them and mask the intelligibility of speech."[66] The way that the cones honed and amplified sound was inseparable from the way they distorted it.

In her review of *Mirage*, Wiegand observed a pattern in the appearance of the cone across different layers of the performance. "She rows with a cone, sitting on the small platform/stage she uses for the piece. She backlights the transparent screen to reveal Patoski arranging a rank of cones against the Archives' back wall. And the cone/funnel image appears in startling silent footage of an active volcano."[67] Oscillating between volumetric form and conical image—in addition to the volcano film, Jonas drew a conical design with chalk on the blackboard—the cone moved through "ambiguous image spaces," stitching together the multiple layers of mediation that made up the performance. Another kind of layering was created through the separation of sight and sound, as performers were audible without being seen (what McDonagh mistook for a tape recording) and distanced—but not disembodied—from their voices in real time as they spoke and sang through the cones. As they moved through different media and behaved like media, Jonas's cones disallowed a sense of equivalence and collapsibility that characterized the instantaneous relationships of McLuhan's auditory space.

With their trumpet shape, Jonas's cones are giant horns: outsized musical instruments that amplify and distort the voice. In a compilation of videotape recorded by

[66] Wiegand, "Unmasking," n.p.
[67] Wiegand, "Unmasking," n.p.

Jonas in the mid-1970s, for instance, the artist James Nares appears seated in a brightly lit room with one of Jonas's long tin cones. The light washes out the video camera, which is placed on its side, yielding ghostly sideways materialization of Nares intoning "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat." In the next scene, Nares and Jonas drone a duet of "Three Blind Mice," the children's song distorted and resonant through metal and paper funnels. "The sounds," Jonas later recalled, "were between foghorn and singing."[68] As she explored the musical capacities of cones of different sizes and materials, they became musical instruments informed by other sounds designed to communicate at a distance, such as a foghorn. (In the mid-nineteenth century, certain foghorns used to signal from ships or trains using loud tones or musical notes were referred to as "telephones.")[69] In this sense Jonas's cones resonated with Yoshi Wada's *Earth Horns with Electronic Drone*, a composition first performed at The Kitchen as *Pipe Horn Concert* in January 1974, on the same program with Jonas's performance of *Funnel* (fig. 3.8). Wada's piece combined an electronic drone created on a synthesizer by Liz Phillips with Wada, Rhys Chatham, Garret List, and Barbara Stewart performing on four of Wada's large "pipe horns," which the artist constructed from plumbing materials (fig. 3.9). As Phillips' drone was tuned to the electronic hum (or AC line cycle) of the room, the pipe horns interacted with the performance space through their sculptural presence that physically shaped and carried sound. Wada modeled the horns—which extended nearly ten feet—after the alphorn, an

[68] See *Mirage II* (2000), edited by Jonas with Seth Price. Quoted in Joan Simon, "Untitled improvisation (after Mirage) and Cones/May Windows," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 236. This video recording is related to an untitled improvisation at 112 Greene Street that occurred between *Mirage* and *The Juniper Tree* in 1976, in which, as Simon writes, "Jonas and James Nares used the *Mirage* cones as horns and amplification devices."
[69] "Telephone," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

instrument used by Alps dwellers to communicate across the mountainous terrain.[70] Wada's linkage of experimental instruments with early technologies of long-distance communication illuminates the telephonic quality of Jonas's cones that similarly bridged sculpture and sound.[71]

In addition to modulating the voice, Jonas used the cones to, in her words, "channel and direct sound."[72] The cones directed sound away from and toward the bodies of performers and spectators, as well as at times channeling recorded sound from a speaker like an outsized phonograph horn. This notion of directing sound through space is recorded in Jonas's journals from the period. Among notes for developing *Funnel* later in 1975, Jonas wrote "cones + directional sound."[73] This phrase surfaces the following year, on the first page of a notebook Jonas began in Poona, India, in January of 1976. "DIRECTIONAL SOUND," Jonas wrote in block letters among brief notes about sufi dance. Beneath this phrase, Jonas added in pencil: "electricity."[74] As "directional sound" links cones with electricity in Jonas's notes, echoing the configuration of Wada's *Earth Horns with Electronic Drone*, a particular media history surfaces. In this history, more than musical instruments, cones echo the earliest "telephones": devices for directing sound to and from bodies at a distance before the advent of electroacoustics.

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[70] Miki Kaneda, "Earth Horns with Electronic Drone," http://www.dustedmagazine.com/reviews/4639

[71] Later, in the mid-1990s, Terry Adkins would combine sculpture and music in a similar vein with his Akrhaphones, eighteen-foot horns Adkins said he believed the angels would play during the Last Judgment. https://dailynorthwestern.com/2013/02/28/thecurrent/state-of-the-art-artist-terry-adkins-readdresses-and-makes-history/

[72] Jonas, "My New Theater I: Tap Dancing," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 354.

[73] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1975).

[74] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976).

"Since ancient times, sailors, hunters, and military commanders had communicated at a distance with speaking trumpets," Mara Mills has described.[75] Conical instruments for transmitting sound across a distance were developed in a European context in the mid-seventeenth century by Athanasius Kircher and Samuel Morland, who rivaled one another in their quest to invent the "more powerful *loud-speaking trumpet*."[76] Morland's experiments with horns of different sizes for the long-distance projection of the voice reached an apex with his construction of a twenty-foot copper trumpet that could reportedly carry the user's voice a mile and a half away.[77] As Siegfried Zielinski has written, Kircher developed giant funnels and other "conduits for carrying sound, which he calls 'channels,'" as "devices for eavesdropping, which, used the other way round, can amplify sound and stage miraculous events."[78] Kircher's channels could collect sound for surveillance purposes or carry and amplify distant speech. He designed enormous spiral-shaped funnels linking two rooms. With the tapered end of the funnel hooked up to a metal bust and the large end opening onto a chamber with unseen listeners and/or speakers, the heads would either pick up snippets of conversation or startle passersby by appearing to speak.[79]

As Mills has shown, the "loud-speaking trumpets" developed in the seventeenth century gave rise to the initial "telephones" later in the nineteenth. It was at this time that trumpets designed to amplify sound were developed into portable hearing and conversation aids. "Mechanical hearing devices are easily banished en masse to the realm

[75] Mara Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," *Endeavor* Vol. 33 No. 4 (December 2009), 141.
[76] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 141.
[77] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 141.
[78] Siegfreid Zielinski, *The Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 127-128.
[79] Zielinski, *The Deep Time of the Media*, 127.

of quackery and comics, or to the era of the pre-electric," Mills writes. "Yet the early hearing aid industry exchanged components, vocabulary and metaphors with other acoustic—and eventually electroacoustic—fields. Trumpets and conversation tubes, like string or wire transmitters, went by the name of 'telephone' early in the 19th century."[80] Before it denoted the electrical device patented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, "telephone," meaning any of various types of acoustic apparatus, device, or instrument for conveying sound over a distance, initially referred to the prosthetic instruments for extending the voice: from speaking tubes to "lover's telephones" connected with string.[81] The telephone's nickname "the horn" perhaps derives from the musical instrument or the cone of a gramophone or phonograph that collected sound for recording or amplified recorded sound during playback—based on the same principle as speaking and hearing trumpets.[82] When it was introduced later in the nineteenth century, Mills writes, "the electric telephone extended the capacity of earlier objects that channeled the voice, also called telephones."[83]

As Mills argues, the trumpets that became available in the nineteenth century were early forms of telephony as well as the first mobile communications technologies. The large horns developed by Kircher and Morland gave way to more portable modes of conversation at a distance in the nineteenth century, as speaking tubes and hearing trumpets appeared on the consumer market. "Acoustic instruments and hearing aids proliferated throughout the nineteenth century—matched by a rising emphasis on concealment," Mills observes. "Clearly, mechanical hearing aids also functioned as

[80] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 140.
[81] "Telephone," *Oxford English Dictionary.*
[82] "Telephone," *Oxford English Dictionary.*
[83] Mara Mills, "The Audiovisual Telephone: A Brief History," in *Handheld? Music Video Aesthetics for Portable Devices*, ed. Henry Keazor (Heidelberg: ART-Dok, 2012), 36.

stigma symbols, marking the otherwise invisible disability of hearing loss."[84] The brief life of speaking and hearing trumpets attests to an investment in immediacy and transparency—values ascribed to technologies that reproduce bodily presence at a distance—that is rooted in the minimization of bodily difference. "These objects signify one of the first applications of *transparency*—the design principle of 'naturalness,' 'intuitiveness' and 'unobtrusiveness'—to communication technology."[85] Transparency would be key to the ostensible "immediacy" of the electronic telephone: its "seeming lack of mediation compared to communication technologies such as telegraphy or mail."[86] "Mounting concerns with hearing loss and with conspicuous mediation were part of the same milieu—one that defined communication as a seamless act and demanded control over communication difference."[87] Mills' archaeology of the telephone in portable prosthetics reveals the investment in the minimization of both distance and difference that underlies the value of immediacy.

Invoking the early history of telephones, as physical extensions of the mouth and ear (and occasionally the eyes), Jonas's cones are related to what Uri McMillan has called "prosthetic performance."[88] In his genealogy of black feminist performance, McMillan recasts Fried's notion of "objecthood" as a tactic of resistant embodiment. As he writes, "objecthood, far from acting alone, instead often acts in collaboration with inanimate props that are transformed into active agents."[89] As McMillan writes, Adrian

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[84] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 144.
[85] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 144-145.
[86] Mills, "The Audiovisual Telephone," 36.
[87] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 146.
[88] Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 10.
[89] McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 10. McMillan's primary example is Ellen Craft, a former slave (and who he considers a performance artist avant la lettre) who escaped to

Piper's Catalysis series (1970-1973), for instance, some of Piper's interventions in public spaces around New York City involved bodily prostheses in the form of rags protruding from the mouth and balloons strung to the teeth and ears that transformed her body into a catalyzing sculptural object (fig. 3.10). Other nearly contemporaneous work by Rebecca Horn involved prostheses that extended the body. *Trunk* (1967), for instance, is a prosthesis that links the performer's face to her breasts, or *Finger Gloves* (1972), prosthetic gloves made from fabric and three-foot lengths of wood that extend the fingers. While extending corporeal faculties, Horn's sculptural extensions also foreground the limitations of the body: rendering it extra-sensitive yet vulnerable. Her *Head Extension* from 1972 involves a cone-shaped prosthesis reminiscent of Jonas's funnels (fig. 3.11). Made from metal, rubber, and fabric, this sixteen-foot cone was placed over the head of a male performer. Blinded and wavering under the weight of the cone, the performer was then instructed to move, aided by assistants who, stationed at a fixed distance from him marked by ropes, communicated with him and with each other while maintaining this uniform separation.

Recalling the advent of the earliest telephones as extensions of the body, Avital Ronell has argued that the electronic telephone continues to be a prosthetic device. Drawing on Freud's notion of the "auxiliary organs" that technologically transform man into "a kind of prosthetic God" and McLuhan's definition of media as "live electronic extensions," Ronell writes that, as a technology which ostensibly overcomes the physical

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freedom by posing as an elderly white man with a poultice covering her right hand, so that she would not be asked to write (75-80). Observing Craft's "deft manipulation of disability," McMillan notes that "[p]rosthetics, a term usually associated with bodily lack, can also be a morphological surplus"…"These technological devices, such as pacemakers or bodily appendages, execute acts of surrogation, seeking to literally 'embody and replace'" (75-76).

absence of an other, the telephone re-embodies this corporeal lack as a prosthetic supplement.[90] Stemming from this psychoanalytic standpoint, in which the female body has represented such a lack (i.e. the absence of the phallus), the phone "duplicates, replaces, or protects" something feminine, vaginal: "the 'thing' in its not-being-there, comes down to something like an invaginated ear, or lips forming a mouth."[91] Jonas echoed this association of the telephone with a female organ when she described to Wiegand the funnel as something womb-like: "something that gathers in as well as sending out, something feminine."[92] As the shape of some of the earliest telephones, when placed to the mouth or the ear, the cone enacts an extension of the body that is an alternative to the female nervous system that invisibly undergirds McLuhan's notion of media as "extensions of man." As Ronell observes, the electric telephone, which delivers the disembodied voice, only appears to be an organ without a body. "But 'without body'—what is this? The ear, eye, even skin, have been divested of authority as they acquire technological extension and amplification in media," she writes. "But the radically of the transaction takes place to the extent that technology has broken into the body (every body: this includes the body politic and its internal organs of state)."[93] With the telephone, technology breaks into the body by extending but not overcoming physical distance or corporeal difference, as the simultaneous relations of McLuhan's acoustic space would suggest.

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[90] Ronell, *The Telephone Book,* 88-90.
[91] Ronell, *The Telephone Book,* 103, 97. Ronell links the phone to Freud's discussion of the origins of castration anxiety, when a boy looks to the mother for an image of his own penis and instead he "finds that the mother has instead another mouth—a mouthpiece and a receiver that have been kept in reserve, hidden, and virtually silent" (97).
[92] Quoted in Wiegand, "Unmasking," n.p.
[93] Ronell, *The Telephone Book,* 109.

Echoing Ronell's association of the technologized body inaugurated by the telephone with "the body politic," Jonas has referred to her conical props as megaphones: devices that link the individual body to the projection of public speech. "It is an enlarged, yet low-tech amplifier," Jonas has said, "a variation on the hand-held megaphone."[94] On the one hand, the megaphone evokes the authority of the director—film sets being one of the few places, in addition to sporting events and public assemblies, where hand-held megaphones are still used. On the other hand, in its portability and ease of use by one person, the megaphone has some resemblance to the portapak, which liberated moving image-making technology from the expensive apparatus of filmmaking. The portapak could be physically carried through public space, but it could also become a "megaphone" by reaching a far wider public in concert with television: such as when, in 1969, CBS asked the Videofreex collective to contribute footage to a documentary program on youth culture. The Videofreex's interviews with activist Abbie Hoffman and Black Panther Party chairman Fred Hampton recorded on portapaks never aired on CBS, so in 1971 they formed their own pirate TV station in Lanesville, New York.[95] As Jonas has remarked, invoking the historical use of the megaphone to amplify the expressions of marginalized subjects, particularly during protests of the 1960s and 70s, in place of a medium like sculpture (in which she received her MFA) that had long since been

[94] Jonas, "Transmission," in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 130.
[95] See Videofreex, "Fred Hampton: Black Panthers in Chicago," 1969 (Video, black and white, sound, 24 min.) and "Chicago Travelogue: Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and the Yippies," 1969 (Video, black and white, sound, 40:30 min.). Videofreex Archive, Video Data Bank, Chicago.

"dominated by men," the emergent medium of video "gave women a voice."[96] By pairing and even swapping out video for the "low-tech amplifier" of her sculptural megaphones in the mid-1970s, Jonas recalled an offshoot of the prosthetic history of the telephone in which the voice is both extended and re-embodied through public performance.

In the late nineteenth century, while working on Bell's design for the telephone, Thomas Edison experimented with the long-range amplification and direction of sound. His "megaphone" consisted of a seven-foot long funnel attached to a speaking trumpet that could broadcast speech over a distance of two miles. "Now, at last, we have a megaphone, which is to the ear almost what the telescope is to the eye," *Scientific American* reported in 1878.[97] Coupled with its reverse—the "telescopophon," or "long-range ear"—Edison's design was twofold: both hearing aid for picking up distant sounds and loudspeaker for projecting the voice.[98] For Edison, the "only drawback as yet is the large size of the apparatus."[99] In step with the prosthetic phones described by Mills, Edison soon set about making the megaphone more easily portable. In 1878, "Edison—himself hard of hearing—discussed his plan to adapt these instruments into a prosthesis."[100] Edison's first design for what he called the megaphone was a device to aid hearing that consisted of two "listening funnels" connected to the ears by flexible tubes as well as a "speaking funnel" that could be held to the lips (fig. 3.12). It was at this point that Edison's megaphone merged into the history of the telephone, its miniaturization and

[96] "Joan Jonas on Feminism," video produced in conjunction with Performance 7: *Mirage* by Joan Jonas, The Museum of Modern Art, 2009. http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/89/508
[97] "Megaphone," *Oxford English Dictionary*.
[98] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 142.
[99] Quoted in Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 142.
[100] Mills, "When Mobile Communication Technologies Were New," 142.

portability contributing to the desired transparency eventually ascribed to the electric telephone.

Yet the megaphone lived on as a portable media device in its own right used to convey sound over a distance and amplify the voice. In keeping with Edison's original funnel design, the megaphone is conical in shape (fig. 3.13). Held to the mouth, recalling the prosthetic origins of the telephone, it is a device typically used by one person to address a group. Unlike the electric telephone, the sound projected by the megaphone travels over a distance but not out of range of the speaker's bodily presence. Bret Edwards has studied the curious history of the megaphone as an instrument that has been used both "to enforce and contest the status quo."[101] Edwards traces the adoption of Edison's invention as a "gendered object of communication" within Victorian culture.[102] Initially, the megaphone was an acoustic constant in a range of leisure activities (fig. 3.14). During sporting events, fairs, and tours (where automobile excursions through New York were led by a "Megaphone Man"), the device accorded predominantly male speakers authority and stature borrowed, in part, from the use of megaphones (or "fire trumpets") by fire marshals to direct the public.[103] Though the users of megaphones in the late nineteenth century were primarily male, Edwards notes that, at the turn of the twentieth century, megaphones were taken up by American women in their quest for the vote (fig. 15). In one report from New York in 1904, for instance, suffragettes went out onto the streets where, in addition to playing a hurdy-gurdy and handing out "Vote for

[101] Brent Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture: Design, Use and Symbolism in North American Society, 1878-1980," *Material Culture Review* 73 (Spring 2011), 9.
[102] Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 10.
[103] Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 11-13.

Women" badges, they shouted slogans through a megaphone from a roving taxi.[104] That women adopted such a public tool invested with male authority broke with their relegation to the private, domestic realm. The portability of the megaphone bolstered their newfound mobility as its performance of power eroded patriarchal divisions of space.

The early use of the megaphone by women agitating for the vote signaled a shift in the cultural use of the megaphone, particularly after a transistorized model was introduced in 1940 for use by the German army at the outset of the Second World War. Just as the fire marshals had emboldened the Megaphone Men of the Victorian era, the original military context of the transistorized megaphone reinvested the device with an authoritative timbre as it became, as Edwards writes, "a politicized and democratized cultural symbol" available to "a more expansive, diverse group of users."[105] The electroacoustic megaphone, which was capable of amplified public address (especially when paired with loudspeakers), continued to be used by police and fire officials but was also taken up by people to speak back to power. In America, this came to a head during the civil rights movement in the mid-1960s and into the 1970s, when marginalized groups gathered in public to protest discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality (figs. 3.16 and 3.17). As Edwards observes, with this social use, "the megaphone increasingly became synonymous with opportunity and liberation—enabling one's traditionally marginalized voice to be amplified and, no less significantly, recognized and respected."[106]

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[104] Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 10.
[105] Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 14.
[106] Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 9.

As it became a media device embedded in activism, the megaphone reversed the development of the telephone described by Mills. Rather than seeking to minimize communication difference associated with the deaf, the megaphone invokes the original association of the telephone with non-normative bodies. Therefore if the megaphone was historically invested with patriarchal authority, as it was taken up by marginalized subjects to gain a voice and public recognition, its power also derived from amplifying differences suppressed by the dominant culture. While the electric telephone appeared to collapse distance and overcome the body in auditory space, the megaphone, even—and especially—when transistorized, loudened the voice and extended the body in such a way that cut against the grain of miniaturization and transparency. As a reporter wrote about Wilma Soss, who brought a megaphone with her to voice protest at a steel corporation meeting in 1958, "no one could ignore the woman whose voice was magnified by an electronic megaphone."[107]

Around the time she was working on *Mirage*, Jonas brought her cones into the public space of downtown New York City. *Mirage II*, a compilation of videotape that Jonas recorded in the mid-1970s and edited with Seth Price in 2000, shows an improvised, nocturnal concert on the streets of the Financial District around 1976. Through steam rising from an open grate, Jonas and her friend, the painter Pat Steir, are visible on the wide steps of a colonnaded building. Each wears flowing white clothing and holds a large tin cone. At the bottom of the steps, Jonas has let her cone, which is nearly as long as she is tall, clatter onto the concrete. Stationed higher up on the steps, Steir wields another cone that appears to be twice her height. She hoists the funnel to her

[107] Quoted in Edwards, "The Megaphone as Material Culture," 17. Soss, President of the Federation of Women Shareholders in American Business, was supporting two failed resolutions and a former employee at the US Steel Corporation shareholder meeting.

lips. It extends a good distance from her body, moaning through it. The women slowly pace the steps, droning and howling through the cones, dragging them, holding them upright like staffs (fig. 3.18).

The cones appear throughout the compilation of tape from this period that Jonas edited with Price, along with news segments taped off the television set, chalk drawings, and a ritualistic performance in the Sardinian countryside. In another scene from the Financial District, Jonas appears with her cone extended across the width of an alleyway. She howls into the cone as she rolls it along the cobblestones toward the camera. This howl is echoed by another call—presumably Steir baying through her cone in an unseen location. Witnessed by an unsuspecting audience on the streets of the Financial District, this improvised performance (which was joined by an anonymous stranger) brought Jonas's cones more fully into the milieu of the megaphone: public space.[108]

Even as Jonas considered them "a variation on the hand-held megaphone," she did not use them in a traditional activist sense: to make public demands or voice protest. Yet as she brought her cones out into urban terrain populated by an anonymous and fleeting audience, Jonas suggested that the auditory space plumbed and investigated by other artists and composers was not neutral, but a contested and lived in public space. Moreover, by invoking the history of megaphones with her outmoded "low-tech amplifiers," Jonas resisted the idea of auditory space as both something that could be instantaneously traversed and that could give rise to simultaneous relations in spite of bodily limitations, physical distance, and communication difference. In her performances

[108] "Chronology of Works," *In the Shadow a Shadow*, Joan Jonas and Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015), 523.

that followed *Mirage*, Jonas would engage a kind of public speech, answering the long-distance call of a feminist oral tradition.

The Human Voice Box Handed Down

While it represented the horizon of a culture increasingly networked by electronic media, McLuhan's notion of auditory space was founded on a fantasy of a collective past. If auditory space was constituted by electronic frequencies, it was also resonant with, in McLuhan's parlance, the sounds of "tribal drums" and voices of "the old oral cultures." "The tribalizing power of the new electronic media, the way in which they return us to the unified fields of the old oral cultures, to tribal cohesion and pre-individualist patterns of thought," McLuhan wrote, would give rise to the contraction of the globe into "a tribe or village where everything happens to everyone at the same time: everyone knows about, and therefore participates in, everything that is happening the moment it happens."[109] McLuhan famously called this renewed mode of collective existence on a worldwide scale the "global village."[110] He envisioned the global village as something revolutionary insofar as it rekindled a forgotten "tribal" existence through technology: "We live in a single constricted space resonant with tribal drums."[111] If the written word had limited the connective capacities of oral cultures, promoting instead a primarily visual society that was linear and fragmented, then electronic media would lead to a "retribalization" based on an imagined past of shared primal information networks.

[109] McLuhan, "Agenbite of Outwit," 124.
[110] Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 25.
[111] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* 36.

McLuhan's idea of auditory space is a model of communication that both rests on and muffles other modes of aural transfer. At the same time, the collapse of distance that characterized the auditory entails the collapse of the distance between cultures through space as well as through time.

Jonas has often remarked on the way that she drew, in her performances, on anthropology texts and rituals and imagery from other cultures encountered though her travels. "I was researching, quite a bit, the rituals of other cultures through anthropological books and so on," she told Glueck. "I was interested in comparing that to my state and New York City…You know, who I am and what kind of ritual am I doing for the audience."[112] When she started making performances, Jonas understood her actions as rituals. On one level, the idea of ritual provided a way of imagining performance outside of theatrical or choreographic paradigms. This was related to the broader, contemporaneous emergence of "performance" as an object of study from the intersection of theater and anthropology in the influential scholarship of the director Richard Schechner and the anthropologist Victor Turner.[113] Particularly as her performances were wedded to video, a technology taken up by McLuhan acolytes that would also fast became an ethnographic tool, Jonas's avid travel and interest in the rituals of other cultures might seem to go hand in hand with the technological contraction of the

[112] Jonas, interviewed by Glueck, 296.
[113] See Richard Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory 1970-1976* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977), particularly "From Ritual to Theatre and Back: the Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad" (1974-1976), and his later *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) and later *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982) and *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987). See also Ernest Theodore Kirby, *Ur-Drama: The Origins of Theatre* (New York: NYU Press, 1975).

world into a "global village." Yet as she looked to other cultures, Jonas insisted on textures of distance—delays, dislocations, illusions—that ran up against McLuhan's notion of the "retribalization" of a global community, in which all (but not really *all*) parts of the world would be continually present to one another.

Mirage followed Jonas's visit to an ashram in India beginning in January of 1976, which she has called an underlying inspiration for the piece.[114] Like Yvonne Rainer and Schechner, who also traveled to India in the 1970s (and with whom she was in contact at the time), Jonas found that her experience in India affected her approach to performance in form and content. The only explicit reference to Jonas's experience in the Indian ashram in *Mirage* is a sequence inspired by a meditation exercise in which she sheds a Mexican mask and proceeds to shake vigorously in front of the film she compiled of stock footage of volcanoes exploding. "As the screen enlarges behind her," the script reads, "Jonas drops the mask, runs in place, and shakes her entire body violently for the duration of the film." After Jonas did a handstand off the stage, she reappeared with another performer amongst a group of cones behind the screen. Lit from behind, shadows of the tall cones replaced the volcanoes onscreen. "Out of sight, Jonas sings duet with audio on monitor as other performer directs the sound by moving large end of cone into which Jonas is singing."[115]

With their evocation of early distance technologies, the cones suggest that when looking to other cultures, distance is irresolvable; that it correlates to cultural difference that is not evacuated in the dream of the global village. As Carolyn Marvin has written, as

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[114] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976). "*Mirage* (1976) came out of my experience of visiting an ashram in India in the 1970s. See Jonas, "Drawing threads running through," in *In the Shadow, a Shadow*, 348.
[115] Jonas, "Mirage," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 76.

teletechnologies began to stretch across the globe in the nineteenth century, the "vastly extended eyes- and ears-to-be of new machines of communication anticipated few cultural puzzles to unravel, and showed their inventors only the most reassuringly echoic and potent images of themselves."[116] The "echoic image" returned to cultures that had been extended through electronic media resonates with *Mirage*, the title of which denotes an illusory image caused by a reflection in the atmosphere. During *Mirage*, Jonas drew an image of light rays reflected by a convex mirror; a diagram she copied from Leonardo da Vinci. Jonas has said that the triangular design of Leonardo's drawing was related to her interest in cones (fig. 3.19).[117] Beyond a morphological link, the cones also produced an echoic distortion of sound as they carried it across the space. A kind of visual echo, mirage and mirror share the same root—*mirer*: to reflect, from *mirare*: to look—in which looking becomes reflection; an illusion that is the condition of looking into the distance.[118] This kind of distant looking—looking across a cultural divide—always involves a reflection back onto the self, the home culture, even when the looker is searching for a way outside. This is inseparable from a colonialist context. The term "mirage" emerged not simply from the study of atmospherics and perception, but also

[116] Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New*, 193.
[117] "I was using cones at the time, I think that's why I included the drawing of the mirror reflection. I was looking for things that related to cones, that form." Jonas got the image from Leonardo da Vinci, "one of his drawings—of rays, reflecting in a convex mirror." Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979," 3.
[118] "What is the nature of illusion?" Jonas asked herself in the mid-1970s. "What is the future and past of an illusion?" (Joan Jonas Archive. Notebook dated 1978-1979) In a later notebook, she took down a definition of illusion. "Illusion: perception of something objectively existing in such a way as to cause or permit misinterpretation of its actual nature either because of the ambiguous qualities of the thing perceived or because of the personal characteristics of the one perceiving (heat rays on the road, effect of pools of waves) the horizontal lines cause an optical illusion making the object appear in a different position from what it really is in." (Joan Jonas Archive. Notebook dated 1979-1980).

from the clashes of different cultures and the history of colonial domination. The word mirage was coined during French colonialist expansion in North Africa, when the European soldiers were met with flickering desert illusions. Though Jonas does not directly critique this history and her own borrowing from other cultures is problematic, her insistence on distance resists the type of seemingly instantaneous access to other cultures that distance-conquering media might seem to provide.

Exposure to other cultures in addition to India also impacted *Mirage*, this time mediated through ethnography. As the outset of the performance, as the script reads, "Jonas performs series of ritualistic gestures. Begins making 'endless drawing' on blackboard. Alternately draws and erases series of images (heart, cone, sun, moon, rainbow, etc.; this drawing activity continues at various times throughout the performance). Laughs insanely through large end of cone. Blows through small end."[119] As described in the previous chapter, Jonas found what she referred to as the "Endless Drawing" in an anthropological text on the labyrinthine designs found in the Malekulan Journey of the Dead. Jonas's activity of drawing and erasing on a blackboard—both in performance and in film—was also inspired by Maya Deren's film *Divine Horsemen*. In 1976, the same year she would perform *Mirage*, Jonas watched the entirety of the unedited version of Deren's visual record of vodou rituals in Haiti. Like Layard's text, *Divine Horsemen* was an ethnographic venture, as Deren sought to study and preserve (and eventually become initiated into) Haiti's performance traditions. Jonas was particularly inspired by scenes in Deren's film of people drawing. "In 1976 I saw the Maya Deren film of Haitian rituals. It depicted people making white patterns on the ground. The actions were repeated over and over. Designs appeared and disappeared.

[119] Jonas, "Mirage," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 71.

Inspired by these, I concentrated on working with chalk […] I was attracted to the repetitive nature of the practice of drawing. Draw and erase, draw and erase."[120] Jonas refers to the *veve* drawings captured by Deren, symbols which are made by sprinkling a granular substance on the floor during Haitain vodou ceremonies.[121]

At one point during *Mirage*, a performer approaches a blackboard and begins to write on it with chalk as she watches a film projected onto the large screen. The film shows Jonas drawing a series of images with chalk. "I drew numbers, diagrams, arms, and hands while erasing, cutting, wiping, and repeating, as in a palimpsest."[122] Jonas has said that the repetitive nature of these drawings "has the look of ritual," which makes sense given their inspiration in Deren's footage of *veve* powder drawings.[123] That the veve rituals were mediated through film and the fact that Jonas created her own drawings on film both evoke Schechner's theory of ritual, and performance more broadly, as comprised of "strips of behavior." The ethnographic use of media to record and analyze human behavior—from Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson filming dance in Bali to the anthropologists studying kinesics capturing the flow of minute facial expressions in different societies—was, by the mid-1970s, key to making performance visible in different cultural contexts. The impact of recording media on performance as it stemmed from a confluence of theatrical and anthropological contexts fostered by Schechner and his collaborators is evident through his definition of performance as "restored behavior." Schechner first articulated this concept in 1977. His notion of performance as behavior

[120] Jonas, "Drawing threads running through," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 347-348.
[121] As Jonas told Glueck, "in this Maya Deren footage you saw people making these drawings with white powder on the ground; beautiful drawings. And I was very influenced by that and I made a whole series of chalk drawings inspired by that." Jonas, interviewed by Glueck, 47.
[122] Jonas, "Drawing threads running through," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 348.
[123] Jonas, interviewed by Glueck, 47-48.

that is repeated and repeatable—"twice-behaved behavior"—is essentially a concept based on media recording, as Schechner defines restored behavior in filmic terms:

> Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. […] Because the behavior is separate from those who are behaving, the behavior can be stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed…Restored behavior is "out there," distant from "me." It is separate and therefore can be "worked on," changed, even though it has "already happened."[124]

Schechner's notion of performance as "strips of behavior" provided a conceptual hinge between contemporary performance and longer-standing and more diffuse forms of ritual. "Restored behavior is used in all kinds of performances from shamanism to exorcism to trance, from ritual to aesthetic dance and theater, from initiation rites to social dramas, from psychoanalysis to psychodrama and transactional analysis."[125] As Judith Rodenbeck has written, Schechner's definition of performance as something inherently repetitious challenges theorizations of performance that hinge on pure presence.[126] Combined with the ethnographic function of the phonograph, the film camera, and finally the video recorder, these aspects of repeatability and expropriation form a problematic inherent to performance in the 1970s. Though her repetitive and transformative acts of drawing evoke Schechner's notion of performance as "strips of behavior," particularly as acts of drawing and erasing were translated into a film, Jonas would engage the way that behavior is "stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed" through a kind of long-distance media that is closer to the telephone than to film: what she called "the

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[124] Richard Schechner, "Restoration of Behavior" (1977), in *Between Theater and Anthropology*, 35-36.
[125] Schechner, "Restoration of Behavior," 35.
[126] Judith Rodenbeck, "Three Notes on the Behavioral Turn," *The Brooklyn Rail* (March 4, 2013).

technology of the human voice box handed down."[127] As Schechner himself acknowledged, "Performance knowledge belongs to oral traditions."[128]

Beginning in 1976, the cone would serve a fulcrum between Jonas's video performances of the mid-1970s and her pieces based on fairy tales of the late 1970s. Rather than video, Jonas used audiotape in these performances that were more fully engaged with storytelling. The first of her pieces based on fairy tales was *The Juniper Tree*, which was initially commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia in 1976 as a performance for children. Jonas would later perform the piece as a collaborative work at The Kitchen (1977) and as a solo work in her Mercer Street studio (1978), among other locations (fig. 3.20). *The Juniper Tree* was based on a fairy tale recommended to Jonas by her friend, the poet Susan Howe, who read the story during the children's version in Philadelphia. In 1979, Jonas would make another performance based on two different fairy tales titled *Upside Down and Backwards*. Though Jonas used audiotape in her fairy tale performances rather than video, she did make a video version of this piece, also titled *Upside Down and Backwards*. This work is based on the combination of two fairy tales that, like "The Juniper Tree," were recorded by the Brothers Grimm in the nineteenth century: "The Frog Prince" and "The Boy Who Went Out to Learn Fear."

Large funnels inaugurated the children's version of *The Juniper Tree* (fig. 3.21). The large metal cones constituted the set along with a tall ladder, twelve-foot-long knitting needles, and a table and chairs: "A row of six tin cones with light bulbs inside stand in a diagonal line; like giant lampshades, they are suspended from the ceiling two

[127] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (children's version)," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 241.
[128] Richard Schechner, "Points of Contact," in *Between Theater and Anthropology*, 23.

inches above the floor."[129] Rather than megaphones, in this performance the cones doubled as reading lamps. While the cones announced the initial version of *The Juniper Tree*, audiotape became Jonas's primary medium to engage the oral tradition of the fairy tale. "Once, stories were passed on by word of mouth, in pictures on walls, stones, and in the earth," Jonas later wrote. "Then they were written and printed, sent by wire, by air, and so on, transmission accelerating and jumping over distances."[130] Jonas has emphasized how the oral mode of transmitting stories is a specifically feminine tradition. As Jonas told Robin White, who performed in *Upside Down at Backwards* at The Performing Garage in 1979, the Brothers Grimm "got a lot of fairy tales from one woman who lived right near Kassel. All fairy tales were passed on like that, mostly by women."[131] "'The Juniper Tree,'" Jonas later wrote "—a story told again and again, mostly by women and then written down by the Grimm Brothers—was, in fact, the technology of the human voice box handed down."[132] Part and parcel of this feminine telling that exceeds the Grimm Brothers' inscription and authorship is an even more distant telling: as Jonas has suggested, the stories "came from various ancient sources" that were "handed down over the years."[133] In answering this long distance call of female storytellers, Jonas also explored feminine archetypes embedded in the stories: playing the roles of mothers, daughters, and witches. Rather than reiterating consistent or stable types, part of the pleasure inherent to this mode of storytelling, as in the children's game

[129] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (children's version)," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 98.
[130] Jonas, "Statement," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 342. Originally published in "Statements on technology in art & society," Ruimte 11, no. 1 (1994): 39 and revised in 2000.
[131] Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979," 23.
[132] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (children's version)," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 241.
[133] Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979," 23.

of telephone, derives from the distortion created through transmission. Through this technology of the voice box handed down, stories passed from afar are textured with the echoes and dislocations that the imperative of transparency attached to other technological media seek to eliminate.

Rebecca Schneider has likened the particular quality of oral knowledge as it is passed through performance to echoes. In contrast to documents (in this case, media recordings) that are easily filed into the historical archive, Schneider argues that performance "remains differently or in difference," through repetitions (such as the telephone-like retellings of fairy tales) that make no claims to exactitude or originality. It is in this sense that transmission via performance is akin to echoes. "If echoes," Schneider writes, "resound of lived experience produced in performance, then we are challenged to think beyond the ways in which performance seems, according to our habituation to the archive, to disappear."[134] As Jonathan Sterne has shown, the disappearance ascribed to performance has been used to justify the disappearance of certain cultures. He has argued that some of the first ethnographic recordings made of Native American song in the late nineteenth century—of the Hopi Snake Dance, for instance (which Jonas saw performed in the mid-1960s)—coded indigenous ways of life as rapidly disappearing and therefore in need of recording, implicitly supporting the annihilation of these cultures in America. As they "cast Native Americans as existing in the collective past of white society," some of the first audio recordings give the lie to McLuhan's notions of auditory space and the global village as wrapping the globe in a

[134] Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," in *Perform, Repeat, Record*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 146.

field of presence "resonant with tribal drums."[135] As Sterne writes, it was precisely at the moment that "they existed in the same space" that "time was used as a measure of difference between native and white cultures."[136] As it resists the linear logic of history governed by the archive, and therefore defies disappearance, performance knowledge such as oral tradition may restore presence—of the coevalness of cultures—but in such a way that acknowledges distance and "remains in difference." In contrast to the archival impulse, Schneider encourages an investigation of "the ways in which performance, less bound to the ocular, 'sounds' […] differently, via itself as repetition—like a copy or perhaps more like a ritual—like an echo in the ears of a confidence keeper, an audience member, a witness."[137]

Audiotape's ability to faithfully record sound might seem to align with the value of transparency that Mills pointed out in relation to the electric telephone or the "habituation to the archive" critiqued by Schneider. Yet, just as Jonas never used videotape simply to record her performances, she did not use audiotape for these purposes. In *The Juniper Tree*, Jonas recorded herself telling the tale of a wicked stepmother who devours her stepson and is then avenged by the daughter. The tape possessed pauses signaled by a blue light in the performance in which Jonas would insert sounds or actions. The audio track was also periodically interrupted by a dog barking in the distance. At this sound Jonas would always stop was she was doing and listen. The performance of listening correlated to making space for silences, during which possibilities that were perhaps implied but unspoken in the story could unfold. In *Upside*

[135] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 311.
[136] Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 312. Sterne draws on drawing on Johann Fabian's idea that a "denial of coevalness" is essential to anthropology's conception of modernity.
[137] Schneider, "Performance Remains," 146.

Down and Backwards, Jonas manipulated the tape itself to defamiliarize the narratives by telling them both at once. "On audiotape, Jonas tells a double story. *The Frog Prince* (told in reverse) intercut with *The Boy Who Went Out to Learn Fear* (told in normal order), two Grimm Brothers' fairy tales rewritten."[138] The tales echo, intersect, and diverge from one another, generating new meaning. Intervening on the level of inscription ("tales rewritten"), Jonas evokes Friedrich Kittler's discussion of audiotape as revolutionizing recoded sound by making possible its manipulation—"Storing, erasing, sampling, fast-forwarding, rewinding, editing."[139] As a recording medium, audiotape always invites the possibility of undoing a faithful and transparent transcription of sound. In this sense it resonates with Schechner's filmic analogy, as "strips of behavior" may be "stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed" through performance after performance, handed down and dispersed.

Retold and remixed over the ages, fairy tales constitute a form of speech that is both public and feminine. As Douglas Crimp suggested, Jonas was drawn to fairy tales because of their public nature: "these stories are clearly not written by Jonas, or, for that matter, by anyone else. Fairy tales exist within the long traditions of their telling." Crimp links the way in which oral tradition disrupts notions of both unitary authorship and singular subjectivity to Jonas's use of audiotape in her performances based on fairy tales. "Jonas severs her telling voice from her performing body, using the dislocation of an audiotape; thus within each performance the tales are twice told." This dislocation is redoubled every time the performance is redone "with different performers, even different numbers of performers, in radically different spaces, using different mechanical

[138] Jonas, "Upside Down and Backwards," in *Scripts and Descriptions,* 99.
[139] Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999), 108.

and technological equipment and different props."[140] Jonas's dislocating approach to storytelling runs against the grain of McLuhan's notion of the "old oral cultures" as "unified fields" of experience. Just as the cones reclaim what Mills calls "conspicuous mediation," Jonas's insistence on textures of distance and the role of the performing body in telephonic traditions of telling also runs counter the technological imperative of immediacy: from miniaturized phones to ethnographic transparency.

That Sense of Being There

In 1967, the composer Maryanne Amacher began a series of pieces that she would dub "long distance music." Amacher created over twenty sonic "city links" between 1967 and 1988. As she described it, this music at a distance, which included both performances and installations, comprised "the sounding resources of 2 or more remote locations (cities or locations within a city): through electronic links music is composed, at spaces distant from each other, together in time."[141] As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, Amacher used open high-frequency telephone lines, which she referred to as "telelinks," to stream sound from one location to another. In the first iteration of *City-Links*, Amacher live mixed eight telelinks from different outdoor and indoor locations around Buffalo on the local radio station over a twenty-eight hour broadcast. In a more sustained version of long-distance music she began while in residency at MIT in 1973, she installed a telelink from a microphone in the window of a building on Boston harbor to her studio at the

[140] Douglas Crimp, "De-Synchronization in Joan Jonas's Performances," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 10.
[141] Maryanne Amacher quoted in *Maryanne Amacher: City-Links*, booklet published for the exhibition "Maryanne Amacher: City-Links" at Ludlow 28, New York, October 20 – November 28, 2010, curated by Tobi Maier, Micah Silver, Robert The, and Axel Wieder.

Center for Advanced Visual Studies, so that sounds from the distant pier filtered into her workspace.

In the spring of 1976, Amacher set up a new telelink from the Boston harbor to loudspeakers installed in the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT. Amacher's long-distance connection of the atmospheric sound of gulls, ships, and water to the laboratory had a particular correspondence with cutting-edge work of her audience, the scientists developing AI. Stemming from a longer standing computer science program, the lab, cofounded by cognitive scientists Marvin Minsky and John McCarthy in 1970, focused on research surrounding vision, language, mechanical motion and remote manipulation central to the development of intelligent machines. In 1980, Minsky invented a term to describe a major direction in the lab's AI research: "telepresence." In Minsky's coinage, telepresence referred to the remote control of machines that would instantaneously bridge here and there, extending the human body to far off places. Minsky set his sights on a highly sophisticated mode of manipulation that, through sensory feedback, would enable the body to be in two places at once. "The biggest challenge to developing telepresence is achieving that sense of 'being there,'" Minsky wrote.[142] His definition of "true telepresence" echoes Amacher's description, voiced in the previous decade, of her long-distance music: "Time corresponds here to life of the space, to sense of being there."[143] Here: the musician's studio, the artificial intelligence laboratory. There: the distant harbor. That sense of "being there," always divided and disturbed by, at the same

[142] Marvin Minsky, "Telepresence," *Omni* (June 1980), 48.
[143] Amacher quoted in *Maryanne Amacher: City-Links*, 3.

moment, being here: "at the same moment, birds suddenly begin to sing at one location, music begins at another."[144]

Unlike Amacher, Jonas did not use electronic telephone technology in her approach to conveying sound over a distance. In Jonas's performances, long-distance music took a different shape: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" distorted through elongated funnels, a tape-recording of a Mayan song projected through cones. As the media archaeology of the telephone undertaken by this chapter shows, the outwardly elementary form of the cone has a key place in the history of the technological ability to be present at a distance. Though her approach is seemingly more rudimentary than an artist like Amacher, given her sustained engagement with technologies of presence throughout the 1970s, it is perhaps no surprise that Jonas, too, would come into contact at a distance with Marvin Minsky. Not by anything so direct as a telephone call, but by picking up stories by the same science fiction author.

[144] Amacher quoted in *Maryanne Amacher: City-Links*, 5.

"one need only feel the drive to alter oneself and to speak out of alien bodies and souls, and one is a dramatist."

– Friedrich Nietzsche[1]

"Imagine this building is a spaceship that has been traveling for hundreds of years," a woman's voice announces over an intercom in the darkness high above you. "You, the travelers, were born here and will die here. Everyone has forgotten where they came from and where they are going, and the spaceship that nurtures you hums on and on," the voice continues. You imagine yourself a space traveler, seated among a dozen others. "Long ago there were some inhabitants who remembered life on earth and sought to return to their native planet. After an unsuccessful struggle they were driven into hiding in the regions above." You gaze upward. In the dim light, looming balconies are visible. "Although the people on this level passively continue their lives, there is one among you who is curious."[2] A woman screams from somewhere on the upper levels. You look up in the direction of the scream. A distant light switches on, casting large shadows of a woman and man fighting onto the ceiling of the space. The woman begins to run in slow motion to the beat of a single drum down to the level where you are seated, the level of passive life that is about to be shaken out of its status quo.

Joan Jonas's *Double Lunar Dogs*—the title of both a performance (1980-1982) and a video (1984)—is set on a vast spaceship drifting through outer space. As the

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). As quoted and translated by Samuel Weber in *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 40.
[2] Joan Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions 1968-1982*, ed. Crimp (Berkeley and Eindhoven: University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley and Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1983), 111.

prologue indicates, the ship is inhabited by a population that has been traveling through space for so long that, after many generations, they have little idea of their origin or destination. The giant ship supports this group that has forgotten that there is anything outside of it. But they are not alone. The upper regions of the ship are haunted by a shadow population: the mutant descendants of a bygone mutiny who call themselves the Double Lunar Dogs. These beings represent the specter of violence, the irruption of repressed memory, the existence of an outside—an outer space. The Double Lunar Dogs are aliens of the inside: at once markedly distant and intimately related to the ship's populace, they are reminders that one's presence in space cannot be taken for granted.

Double Lunar Dogs was first performed at the University Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley during Jonas's retrospective there in 1980. Jonas performed the piece along with ten artists and a group of musicians from the Bay Area inside the museum building, which served as the spaceship (fig. 4.1). "We used the whole museum, which I always thought of as a square Guggenheim. The audience sat in the middle of the ground floor looking up at the surrounding balconies."[3] Designed by Mario Ciampi in 1970, the former home of the University Art Museum (which has since been relocated) featured concrete balconies and ramps cantilevered over an open interior. Much of the action took place on the balconies which, connected by ascending ramps, echoed both the spiraled galleries of Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic building and, given the stark Brutalist style, the multileveled decks of a towering spacecraft. "Gallery A, one level below the main gallery, represents the living area for the inhabitants of the

[3] Joan Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas*, ed. Jonas and Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015), 280.

spaceship, while the balconies above represent unexplored, forgotten regions."[4] Multicolored lighting was used to direct the audience's attention to different areas of the performance space. A band, The Right Thinking Research Library, was stationed on the first floor balcony. The band was flanked by two projectors that beamed footage that Jonas acquired from NASA onto a screen and a wall on either side of the audience, so that spectators were surrounded by moving images of satellites orbiting in outer space, floating astronauts, pilots at a control board, and a host of celestial bodies.

The audience was seated around two wooden ramps stationed on the ground level. These ramps served as stages for a drama involving two main female characters who engaged one another throughout the performance. The women appeared to both double and antagonize one another: painting one another's portraits on clear panes of glass, miming one another's motions, drawing one another, fighting over the drawings and tearing the papers and one another's hair, donning sequined cat masks and prowling the spaceship. One of the female characters is played by Jonas: she is the searcher, the "one among you who is curious." Her curiosity about the ship's alien population and original mission lead her to tangle with both the Double Lunar Dogs and the "head librarian." "This 'mad wizard' constantly plays with balloons that whistle and sail over the heads of the spectators, drops feathers and rubber balls to test the laws of gravity, and writes mysteriously on a slate."[5] Jonas comes to the librarian with existential questions that he answers enigmatically and dismissively (in speeches written by Constance de Jong). She asks: "What is going on up there? Who are they?" He replies: "They are a gang of wizards who call themselves the Double Lunar Dogs. When I was young I was followed

[4] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 111.
[5] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," 110.

by them for miles, with them tagging at my heels, is that clear?" She asks: "Where do we come from?" He replies: "Forget it. How can you long for a place shadowed by the glories of bygone days? You've mistaken allegorical language for everyday speech. And now you want reports from the outside."[6] Meanwhile, the Double Lunar Dogs (including an actual German shepherd) are glimpsed slowly ascending the museum balconies, singing and playing instruments (fig. 4.2). After Jonas, perched high up on a swing, communes with the Dogs concerning "the existence of outer space"—the possibility of a space outside the ship—she is put on trial and admonished by the librarian: "There is no end, no outside, only the here and now on this ship."[7] On this spacecraft with no past and no future, the "here and now"—the present moment dramatized by the live performance—is utterly strange, riven, haunted.

While the initial performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* was tailored to the Berkeley museum, Jonas adapted the piece for a number of different venues through 1982, including the Teatro del Falcone in Genoa, Italy; Kunsthalle Basel in Switzerland; the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Einhoven; and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. The final performance of the piece took place as part of Documenta 7. The New York version *Double Lunar Dogs* was staged at the Performing Garage in 1981. Previously home to Richard Schechner's Performance Group, the Performing Garage was then the house theater of The Wooster Group, an experimental company founded by director Elizabeth LeCompte and actor Spalding Gray, both former members of The Performance Group. The New York version of *Double Lunar Dogs* included figures from the downtown theater community. Gray played the "mad scientist," while David Warrilow, a

[6] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," 114-115.
[7] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," 118, 122.

well-known interpreter of Samuel Beckett and founding member of another experimental theater group, Mabou Mines, played the "head librarian." This version also featured Jill Kroesen, an artist and musician known for her epic performances at The Kitchen and Franklin Furnace, as Jonas's "double." Together with John Malloy, an Irish actor then based in San Francisco, Gray, Warrilow, and Kroesen were included along with Jonas in the video version of *Double Lunar Dogs*, which was based on the version of the piece staged at the Performing Garage.

The video *Double Lunar Dogs* was produced with TV Lab WNET/Thirteen and the WGBH New Television Workshop and aired on broadcast TV in 1984. Jonas began developing the piece as a film in collaboration with the filmmaker Michael Oblowitz. While the performance was never documented on video (as was the case for the Berkeley version), some of the scenes were shot in The Performing Garage following (but not during) the performances. Other scenes were filmed in Jonas's loft, where Oblowitz shot Warrilow, LeCompte and Ron Vawter, another member of the Wooster Group, reading texts. Ultimately, only Warrilow's monologues were included in the video (as well as onscreen in the performance). The scenes with Malloy were shot in San Francisco, where Jonas also recorded video in the Exploratorium, a science museum known for its participatory exhibits then housed inside a former world's fair pavilion. This was the first time Jonas had worked in a television-editing studio with an extensive suite of special effects. She also worked with Steina and Woody Vasulka, who contributed additional effects. Such effects corresponded to the science fictional theme and the experience of floating through deep space.

Outer space was the motivation for the first so-called "tele"-technology: the telescope. Trained on the stars, the telescope enabled the transportation of sight thousands of miles away, bringing enormously distant information to the eye. Though the telescope was the first in a succession of teletechnologies that would appear to collapse space, it is also a tool that restores a sense of relativity, of distance, of *space*, by making the cosmos graspable. This was the lesson of Galileo, one of the first to use the telescope, as he trained the instrument on outer space in the service of proving that the earth is not the center of the universe. While Jonas had used her cones as telescopes in earlier performances, *Double Lunar Dogs* did not feature telescopic props. Rather, this piece set in outer space engaged a much later mode of existence at a distance: *telepresence*. Rather than a technological device, Jonas engaged telepresence more obliquely through mechanisms of theater. Though Jonas had been making live work since the late 1960s, in *Double Lunar Dogs* she more pointedly engaged with theatrical modes of acting and narrative through the genre of science fiction.

From optical telegraphs to telepathic transmission to prosthetic telephones, each chapter of this dissertation has dealt with a different mode of telepresence at the intersection of video and performance. Broadly defined, telepresence is the ability to be present at a distance, that is, beyond the spatiotemporal coordinates where one is physically situated. This could be achieved through any form of instantaneous transmission: telegraphic signaling, telepathic channeling, telephonic extension, televisual broadcast. This final chapter engages the more specific definition of "telepresence" as it was coined by the cognitive scientist Marvin Minsky in 1980, the year *Double Lunar Dogs* was first performed. Originally based on Minsky's experiments

with remote control technologies at MIT's artificial intelligence laboratory, telepresence is technically defined as the "use of sensory feedback or virtual reality to allow participation in distant events or to aid in the remote operation of mechanical devices and instruments; the impression of being at another location produced by such means."[8] If this definition appears more narrowly technical than the genealogies of teletechnologies mapped by the other chapters, it was (and continues to be) also the stuff of science fiction—the mode of storytelling and realm of speculative technologies staged by *Double Lunar Dogs*.

Following Jonas's lead, this chapter undertakes a media archaeology of telepresence that investigates how, as it surfaced as a speculative technology around 1980, its emergence was bound up with fears and fantasies of transgressing the perceived boundaries of the self taken up by science fiction. Telepresence technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles have become an increasingly common element of everyday life. Yet while drones ostensibly safeguard the bodies of their operators, science fiction would address the more disturbing aspects of dividing or doubling oneself required by this technology of presence. Taking up science fiction through theater, in which the presence of the actor is always split between here and there, Jonas illuminated the stage as a much older laboratory for telepresence. With video screens, robot dolls, a host of doubles (and dogs), *Double Lunar Dogs* dramatizes the alien experience of presence at a distance.

[8] "Telepresence," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Telepresence is Not Science Fiction

Minsky coined the term "telepresence" in an article published in the magazine *Omni*. Here he described a scenario in which a person could extend their physical presence to perform in two different locations at once. "You don a comfortable jacket lined with sensors and muscle-like motors," Minsky proposed. "Each motion of your arm, hand, and fingers is reproduced at another place by mobile, mechanical hands. Light, dexterous, and strong, these hands have their own sensors through which you see and feel what is happening. Using this instrument, you can 'work' in another room, in another city, in another country, or on another planet."[9] Beyond the instantaneous transmission of messages or images enabled by other teletechnologies such as the telegraph or television, this technologized presence would reduplicate touch at a distance, more fully incarnating the body in two places at once (fig. 4.3). "Telepresence emphasizes the importance of high-quality sensory feedback and suggests future instruments that will feel and work so much like our own hands that we won't notice any significant difference."[10] Beyond the terms *teleoperators* or *telefactors* used by scientists to refer to remote control tools, Minsky's selection of the word *telepresence* was staked on "achieving that sense of 'being there.'"[11]

By replicating presence—"that sense of 'being there'"—at a distance, the notion of telepresence fundamentally disturbs embodiment as it is traditionally understood. As Samuel Weber has written, a body may be defined as that "which occupies one place at a time. This means both that a body cannot take place in *more* that one place at a time and

[9] Marvin Minsky, "Telepresence," *Omni* (June 1980), 45.
[10] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.
[11] Minsky, "Telepresence," 48.

that the place it 'takes' is held to be off-limits to all other bodies: two bodies cannot take or share the same place at the same time."[12] With telepresence, however, a body *can* (or could) take place in more than one place at a time: "in another room, in another city, in another country, or on another planet." This distancing of the body from itself entails an expansion of the sensory apparatus to include feedback from another location. In this way, the telepresent body takes place by making room for another body (including the brain), destabilizing the contours of each. In allowing the body to take place in more than one place at a time, telepresence would also undermine what has traditionally been "off-limits" to others (machines and all other alien beings included): the unitary place taken up by a body.

Minsky envisioned a number of applications for telepresence technology on a variety of scales, including surgery, factory labor, undersea mining, and satellite construction. While the technology could increase general productivity by essentially multiplying each worker ("enabling one person to do different jobs in different places"),[13] the most urgent function of telepresence was, as Minsky suggests, enabling people to be present in places that they would otherwise want to stay very far away from. "Three Mile Island really needed telepresence," Minsky writes, referring to the 1979 meltdown of a nuclear reactor in Pennsylvania and the subsequent clean up efforts. Minsky found fault with the clumsy "remote grippers" employed by nuclear plants to perform repairs—"no such device demonstrates true telepresence."[14] Devices that achieved an enhanced remote control by more seamlessly mirroring the hands through complex mechanics and sensory

[12] Samuel Weber, "Television: Set and Screen," *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1996), 115.
[13] Minsky, "Telepresence," 48.
[14] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.

feedback would ostensibly mitigate the challenges of repairing a nuclear reactor at a distance. "If people had a bit more engineering courage and tried to make these hands more like human hands, modeled on the physiology of the palm and fingers, we could make nuclear-reactor plants and other hazardous facilities much safer."[15] The Three Mile Island scenario illuminates the central tension of "true telepresence": the heightened ability to touch something across a distance that also maintains that distance in the face of bodily harm.

"We can employ telepresence in any environment alien to humans," Minsky wrote.[16] The paradox of telepresence lies in its desire to extend sensorial experience while simultaneously guarding the vulnerability of the body as it as made present in such alien environments—places that precisely resist human presence, whether manmade (mines, nuclear reactors) or natural (undersea, outer space). Minsky's vision of telepresence accounts for this by filtering the sensory feedback loop: "Heat or pain is translated into informative but tolerable sensation. Your dangerous job becomes safe and pleasant."[17] This provision trades "achieving that sense of 'being there'" for bodily protection. This trade-off undergirds one of the primary applications of telepresence as it has been realized since 1980: warfare. Along with remote surgery (which Minsky predicted), unmanned aerial vehicles have ascended as technologies of telepresence. Drones allow for the surveillance of distant lands and participation in distant conflict without their operators physically being there. This "ability to step into machines" goes beyond what Helen Thomson has called the "first wave of telepresence" that "simply allowed people to peer at remote places through a camera, and appear at the other end,

[15] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.
[16] Minsky, "Telepresence," 48.
[17] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.

too," which she dates to a teleconferencing system introduced into the workplace by Xerox-Parc in the mid-1980s.[18] Kris Paulsen has addressed the distinction between this now more widespread form of telepresence—from the teleconferencing developed by Xerox-Parc to the ability to instantly video chat—and the particular kind of experience described by Minsky. She observes how the contexts for telepresence identified by Minsky easily could (and have indeed come to) include "conflict zones, protests, and other sites in which some bodies are protected by remote technology, while others are exposed and vulnerable without the power to strike back at anything but a machine."[19] This eventuality highlights the essential question raised by telepresence as it was originally envisioned: "what it means to touch something that cannot touch you back," as Paulsen writes, "and how one's presence is made present when one's agency but not one's body is manifest at a location."[20] Sidestepping these questions in the name of technological advancement contributes to a general sense the telepresent, where distance is collapsed and bodily safety and integrity maintained for those in control.

If video-based technologies like Skype do not fully carry out "true telepresence" as Minsky originally defined it, then neither do the remote control systems as they have developed and been implemented according to the principle of extending one's body by stepping into a machine. Drones, for instance, may be more accurately defined as a mode of teleoperation, as the interfaces of these machines do not provide the sensory feedback

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[18] Helen Thomson, "Here, there, virtually anywhere," *New Scientist* Vol. 216 Issue 2890 (November 10, 2012): 38-41. Thomson notes that in Xerox-Parc's "Media Space project, having cameras in labs in Palo Alto, California and Portland, Oregon, meant people could collaborate on video screens almost 1000 kilometres apart, this ability is now commonplace, thanks to real-time video apps like Skype or FaceTime."
[19] Kris Paulsen, *Here/There: Telepresence, Touch, and Art at the Interface* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 7.
[20] Paulsen, *Here/There,* 15.

and embodied experience of "being there" that Minsky envisaged. This begs the question: what might be threatening or disturbing about "true telepresence"? While, as Thomson reports, robots are being actively designed in the pursuit of "true embodiment"—such as machines developed in an Israeli lab that respond to blood flow in the brain—what has been filtered out of increasingly common experiences understood as telepresence is the experience of stepping into another body and of opening one's body and mind proposed by Minsky.[21] As one of the scientists involved with the Israeli experiment remarked, "[t]rue embodiment goes far beyond classical telepresence, by making you feel that the thing you are embodying is part of you."[22] Perhaps "true embodiment" is not part of telepresence as it is most commonly experienced, but it is in fact the crux of "classical telepresence" as it was originally conceived. A media archaeological approach to this speculative technology reveals an excess surrounding the performance of telepresence that fell away with the development of remote control technologies, an excess still preserved in the pages of science fiction.

Minsky refers to an example of a "startlingly nice telepresence: a remote controlled space suit" designed by NASA. "It looks like a real space suit; you put your arm into the master suit and the slave suit moves just like your arm."[23] Outer space is a prime habitat for the development of telepresence technologies. Minsky suggests the use of these technologies to build space stations and enhance Mars Rovers. Lamenting "how

[21] Thomson, "Here, there, virtually anywhere," n.p. As Thomson describes, at the time she wrote the article (2012), an Israeli student "controlled a robot using only his thoughts – he was at Bar-Ilan University un Israel, inside an fMRI brain scanner, and the robot was in France. The scanner tracked changes in blood flow to his brain's primary motor cortex, and then an algorithm distinguished when he was thinking about moving his left hand, right hand or legs."
[22] Abderrahmane Kheddar of the CNRS-AIST Joint Robotics Laboratory in Tsukuba, Japan quoted in Thomson, "Here, there, virtually anywhere," n.p.
[23] Minsky, "Telepresence," 49.

much more we could have learned with a permanent vehicle on the moon," he advocates for "lunar telepresence" ("The Earth-Moon speed-of-light delay is short enough for slow but productive remote-control").[24] While Minsky is interested in the "alien" environments of outer space, what is latent in his article is how telepresence, by distributing identity over a distance, relatedly opens that identity to an alien presence: an individual divided not only between here and there, but also self and other. This apparition of the extraterrestrial within the borders of the human individual is the nightmare that irrupted in Ridley Scott's 1979 film *Alien*, which came out the year before the publication of Minksy's article. The film features a parasitic alien that, after attaching itself to a member of a spaceship crew during his investigation of a vessel that has crash-landed on a remote planet, smuggles itself into the astronaut's own ship. Laying in wait inside the astronaut, the creature then appears to break out from within him before terrorizing the rest of the people onboard. *Alien* dramatizes, to horrifying effect, contact with a hostile extraterrestrial as a disturbing pregnancy: two presences sharing—or fighting over—the same body. In contrast, Minsky describes the divided experience of telepresence through a neat master/slave paradigm, in which the operator (master) and operated (slave) function together to conquer distance. Telepresence technologies appear to safeguard the self precisely by keeping it at a distance—if only the astronaut in *Alien* had the suit described by Minsky!—yet what possibilities and disturbances lurk within this body-expanding relationship key to "true telepresence"? The apparently safeguarded individual is also a riven self: not simply a distant self but a self *distanced* self. This dividedness disturbs the normal contours of the human individual as they have been, for instance, delineated against something so ostensibly exterior as an extraterrestrial.

[24] Minsky, "Telepresence," 48.

Telepresence might sound like science fiction not simply because it is futuristic, but because it implicitly stages a kind of alien encounter.

"Telepresence is not science fiction," Minsky declared, estimating that a "remote-controlled economy" could be achieved by the turn of the twenty-first century.[25] Minsky gauged that the "technical scope of such a project would be no greater than that of designing a new military aircraft"—indeed, the first unmanned aerial vehicles had already been employed by the Israeli and American militaries from the late 1960s, and would become integral to other armed forces in approximate accordance with Minsky's timeline. In 1980, however, telepresence was still the stuff of speculation—hence its appearance in *Omni*, a magazine devoted to both science and the paranormal. While the article builds on technical texts from the early 1970s—*Remotely Manned Systems* and *Human Factors Applications in Teleoperator Design and Operations*—as Minsky avers, he also incorporated specific suggestions from two venerable authors of science fiction: Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein. "My first vision of a remote-controlled economy came from Robert A. Heinlein's prophetic 1948 novel, *Waldo*," Minsky writes, referring to a story by Heinlein first published in *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1942.[26] The story revolves around Waldo, a character afflicted by myasthenia gravis, or severe muscle weakness, who is also a genius engineer. Because Waldo does not possess the strength to hold himself upright, let alone lift anything else, he constructs an fleet of robotic arms known as "waldoes." Waldo operates his waldoes remotely from his home stationed in space just beyond the earth's gravitational pull, where he may float comfortably. "So Waldo constructed a satellite and invented telepresence devices; he could lie there in zero

[25] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.
[26] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.

gravity and operate his inventions effortlessly," Minsky glosses. "Waldo created dozens of mechanical hands, some merely monkey fists in size, some micrometers in span; he rigged others so huge that each 'hand' spread six meters from finger to thumb. The hands imitated everything he did; he spent all his time out in space operating factories on Earth. Thirty years after he wrote *Waldo*, Heinlein had many suggestions for this article."[27] The waldoes are a fictional prototype of Minsky's vision for "telepresence devices" that would not only extend but also enhance human muscular ability to perform both minute and large-scale operations. As Minsky professed, telepresence is not science fiction, or at least not entirely. Heinlein's term "waldo" has become a nickname for remote manipulators that enable human operators to control hand-like mechanisms through electronic, hydraulic, or mechanical linkages.

Heinlein's advisory role is unsurprising considering that the author was also an engineer. Passages in *Waldo* relish in the technical intricacies of infrastructures of the not too distant future. Along with Asimov, Heinlein was one of the main contributors to *Astounding Science Fiction*, a magazine whose editor, John W. Campbell, shaped the genre by prizing scientific accuracy over literary ambition.[28] *Astounding Science Fiction* flourished during what has been considered the "Golden Age" of science fiction—a periodization tied to the atomic age. Beginning in 1939, Campbell wrote celebratory editorials about advances in atomic physics and, as Roger Luckhurst has described, "coached his writers in nuclear physics and encouraged investigations of the various scenarios affected by the invention" of atomic energy and, ultimately, nuclear weapons.

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[27] Minsky, "Telepresence," 47.
[28] Rob Latham, "Fiction, 1950-1960," in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 83.

As Luckhurst wrote, Campbell's encouragement to engage with horizons of nuclear power led Heinlein "to some prescient reflections on the psychological impact of atomic science."[29] *Waldo* was written the year that Heinlein began service as an engineer for the U.S. Navy, a post he held from 1942 until 1945.

Atomic energy fuels the plot of *Waldo*. The conditions for the future society begin with the discovery of atomic energy, which allow telecommunications infrastructures to be fueled by "radiant power."[30] "He had seen the great transmission lines removed from the sky," one character reminisces, "he had seen the heavy cables being torn from the dug-up streets of Manhattan. He might even recall his first independent-unit radiotelephone."[31] Heinlein's vision of what Minsky would christen "telepresence" is based on this telecommunications revolution, where electrical wires are replaced with radiation. This is not a celebratory tale, however, as the "radiant power" is sickening the population on earth, causing the same muscular deficiencies that afflict Waldo. With both the vulnerable body and telecommunications at the center of the narrative, Heinlein dramatizes the intimate interaction that would give rise to telepresence.

Waldo is a character that exists at a distance. Before he relocated to outer space and interacted with earth only via his waldoes and proto-videoconferencing screens, he was distanced from the majority of the human population because of his disability. His bodily affliction is constantly referenced and derided throughout the novel, even as this apparent physical impairment also serves as the basis for his mental and technological prowess. Early in the story, we encounter Waldo in the midst of a long-distance

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[29] Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction: A Literary History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 92.
[30] Robert A. Heinlein, *Waldo* [1940], republished as *Waldo & Magic Inc.* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 18.
[31] Heinlein, *Waldo,* 18-19.

transaction with earth from inside his zero gravity lair light years away. He is conferencing via a "television receptor" with workers at a factory that employ his waldoes. He attempts to instruct a recalcitrant worker how to correctly operate the devices by performing a demonstration from inside his distant lair. As he manipulates the waldoes from afar he coaches the man on screen: "'Feel it, my dear Alec,' Waldo advised. 'Gently, gently—the sensitive touch.'"[32] Waldo's debility translates into a dexterous lightness of touch, enabling a sympathetic relationship with his machines that instantaneously replicate his actions at a distance. "Waldo continued with unhurried skill, his finger motions within his waldoes exerting pressure which would need to be measured in fractions of ounces, but the two sets of waldoes, paralleled to him thousands of miles below, followed his motions accurately and with force appropriate to heavy work at hand."[33] Waldo becomes waldo: at a distance, the presence of one is inextricable from the other.

After the American government enlists Waldo to help fix the mysterious breakdown of earth's telecommunications and transportation systems that run on radiant power, Heinlein's story takes an occult turn. During a visit to earth, Waldo encounters an antediluvian wizard known as Gramps Schneider who shows him how to cast off his waldoes. Rather than relying on these devices, Schneider teaches Waldo to draw strength into his body by reaching into the "Other World" or "Other Space"—a kind of parallel universe that can be tapped energetically.[34] After instructing earth dwellers how to replace the harmful and expensive radiant power with free energy tapped from this Other Space, Waldo returns to earth and becomes both a surgeon and a ballet dancer. While

[32] Heinlein, *Waldo*, 30.
[33] Heinlein, *Waldo,* 30-31.
[34] Heinlein, *Waldo,* 93, 102-103.

seemingly unassisted, his new existence on earth without his waldoes is nevertheless animated from another location: the Other Space that parallels this world. In this sense Waldo the surgeon is still akin to the telepresent doctors who perform surgery from halfway around the world. This thread of Heinlein's story apparently did not interest Minsky much. (Understandably so: as Waldo notes, like "quinine, hypnotism, and telepathy," knowledge of the Other Space belongs to the "arcane arts as aborted sciences.")[35] Yet this narrative twist is key to what lies at the heart of the story: within the new scale of distances enabled by space travel and atomic energy, we always potentially exist at a distance from ourselves, even (and especially) during our most virtuosic performances.

The New Mutants

In 1980, the year that Minsky published "Telepresence," Jonas made a piece that was likewise inspired by the science fiction of Robert Heinlein. *Double Lunar Dogs* is based on *Universe*, a serial by Heinlein originally published in 1941 in *Astounding Science Fiction*, one year before *Waldo* appeared in that magazine. *Universe* takes place aboard the wandering spaceship staged in Jonas's performance. In Heinlein's story, the passengers exist in the temperate middle region of the huge cylindrical ship, complete with fields and forests; access to the uppermost and lowermost regions that would reveal the limits of the ship is either blissfully ignored or feared and interdicted. The ship exists in a state of total—if delusional—presence: without a past, without a future. Yet, as in *Double Lunar Dogs*, the ship is host to two populations. The uppermost decks of the ship

[35] Heinlein, *Waldo*,108-109.

are populated by a mysterious community of deformed and violent beings known as "muties." In one of the scraps of historical lore that survives in the minds of those who think to ask about it, the muties descended from a band of mutineers who once tried to take control of the ship's course, to continue its original mission of interplanetary discovery. The muties are also alien presences: mutants possessing genes that have been otherwise wiped out by the incineration of abnormal children, a "purifying" practice that contributes to ship's ethos of homogenous existence. When the promising young scientist Hugh Hoyland sets off with his comrades on a mission to eradicate the muties once and for all, he is captured by them and taken in by their leader Joe-Jim Gregory. Joe-Jim is a strapping two-headed being who teaches Hugh that the ship does not, in fact, constitute the universe, that it once had an origin (earth) and a purpose (the discovery of other planets). Through a window hidden at the top of the ship, Joe-Jim shows Hugh that the ship has an outside—an outer space. "That's what you mean by Outside?" Hugh asks.

> "All those beautiful little lights?"
> "Sure," said Joe, "only they aren't little. They're a long way off, you see—maybe thousands of miles."
> "What?"
> "Sure, sure," Joe persisted. "There's lots of room out there. Space. It's big, Why, some of those stars may be as big as the Ship—maybe bigger."
> Hugh's face was a pitiful study in overstrained imagination. "Bigger than the Ship?"[36]

Hugh's exposure to outer space and grasp of distance is bound up with the deepening of his affiliation with Joe-Jim. As a two-headed mutant, Joe-Jim raises the question of Hugh's own alien status: almost incinerated at birth because due to his abnormally large head, Hugh is potentially a mutie himself. Hugh persuades Joe-Jim to let him attempt to

[36] Robert A. Heinlein, *Universe* (1941), republished in *Orphans of the Sky* (New York: Signet, 1965), 37.

convince the other humans to return the ship to its mission. He is imprisoned and tried as a heretic, but eventually broken out by the muties. Following his rescue, Hugh shares Joe-Jim's role as leader of the rag-tag group. "Joe looked annoyed" at this joint leadership, Hugh observes. "Jim did not appear to mind. In fact, he seemed to be enjoying himself."[37]

Double Lunar Dogs loosely follows the narrative arc of *Universe*, in which Hugh sets off the fight the muties, is taken in by them and shown the "outside," returns to the ship, is put on trial, and is rescued by the muties. In the performance version, Jonas played a role based on Hugh: "the one among you who is curious." She adapted and abstracted certain scenes from Heinlein's story for the stage. For instance, in *Universe*, Hugh first glimpses the stars outside the ship from a spherical control room with the console suspended in the middle of it, so that the cosmos appears to surround whomever is sitting in it. In a version of the script published in *BOMB* in 1981 ("Excerpted from a text by Robert Heinlein"), Jonas directly quotes from the story, changing only the pronouns: "she hangs alone in the center of the stellar universe…For the first time she knows the intolerable ecstasy of beauty unalloyed."[38] Jonas translated this image into a scene with a swing festooned with streamers, metallic stars, and flashlights dangling from the ceiling of the performance space (fig. 4.4). As Jonas swung through projections of NASA footage of outer space, a woman elevated by a cherry picker joined her in the upper echelons of the performance space. "We were parted many thousands of years ago, and yet we have not been separated even for a moment" Jonas said, deviating from Heinlein's text. "We are facing each other all day long, yet we have never met." The

[37] Heinlein, *Universe,* 57.
[38] Joan Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," *BOMB* Vol. 1 No. 1 (Spring 1981), 33.

woman answered this paradoxical riddle—a Zen koan—with a Persian proverb: "The arrow that has left the bow never returns." Jonas paired the ecstatic recognition of the "Outside" in Heinlein's narrative with the mysterious experience of doubling—we are facing each other all day long, yet we have never met—which would become a central theme in her theatrical adaptation of *Universe*.

Originally, the text of *Double Lunar Dogs* was comprised entirely of quotations from Heinlein's story. A version of the script published in the first issue of *BOMB* combines quotations from *Universe* and text written by Jonas and de Jong. When Jonas initially began working with Oblowitz to make a film version of the performance, they recorded actors reciting long quotations from *Universe*, which she showed during the performance in Genoa. These performers included David Warrilow along with two members of the Wooster Group, the director Liz LeCompte and actor Ron Vawter (who would later appear opposite Tilda Swinton in Jonas's 1989 video *Volcano Saga*). The actors read passages from Heinlein's story inside Jonas's loft with the lighting designed by Oblowitz. Jonas integrated Warrilow's taped monologues both into the video version of *Double Lunar Dogs* as well as in later iterations of the performance, in which Warrilow's talking head was displayed on an on-stage monitor. Warrilow played the part of the "librarian": standing for the scientists in Heinlein's story who control knowledge aboard the ship, maintaining its collective non-memory.

When Jonas began to present the work publicly, she made sure to credit Heinlein. The program for the New York premiere at the Performing Garage, for instance, clearly credits the author: "This performance was inspired by *Universe*, by Robert Heinlein" (fig. 4.5). Nevertheless, Jonas ultimately did not receive permission to use the text. Jonas then

asked de Jong to rewrite the librarian's (Warrilow's) speeches that had been directly quoted from Heinlein's story. Since Jonas and Oblowtiz had already shot Warrilow's scenes, they superimposed the new dialogue over the footage.[39] This overdubbed footage of Warrilow later appeared in both the performance and video versions of the piece, in which he appeared as a kind of talking head either via a video monitor or split screen. Each time the video stood in for Warrilow, he was already doubled: his lips intimate one thing and his voice another in a residual complication of the doubling up of authorship. This is amplified at one point in the video *Double Lunar Dogs* when both the original audio and the overdub are audible. We hear on the soundtrack, not quite synced to Warrilow's lips: "How can it be? Forget it. How can you long for a place of bygone days?" Yet, in muted tones remaining from the initial recording, he is simultaneously heard to say: "truth handed down"—a fragment from his original monologue, most of which is inaudible. "You've mistaken allegorical language for everyday speech and you want reports from outside," he maintains (but we also hear, muffled beneath his insistence, another snippet of a different speech: "the double lunar dogs").

Jonas's elaboration of the "muties" into the mysterious celestial canines she dubs the Double Lunar Dogs likely stems from the mutant protagonist of *Universe*: Joe-Jim, the character with two heads. Hugh first encounters Joe-Jim "playing himself a game of checkers." Though they were once given to arguing over games, "they both learned early in their joint career that two heads on one pair of shoulders must necessarily find ways of getting along together."[40] Joe-Jim is at once two distinct people and the same individual,

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[39] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," *In the Shadow a Shadow,* 280-281 and Jonas, interview by Grace Glueck, 2009, transcript, Elizabeth Murray Women in the Visual Arts Oral History Project, Columbia University, New York, NY, 22.
[40] Heinlein, *Universe*, 23.

challenging the use of normal descriptors of identity: he is the "two halves of his dual person."[41] Joe-Jim is an alien presence who differs from humans through his particular mutation—a mutation through which he also differs from himself (or, as Hugh puts it, "both of him").[42] He/they clearly break Weber's rule of embodiment: namely, that "two bodies cannot take or share the same place at the same time." Like Waldo, Joe-Jim is a character that can never act alone.

The two-headed character of Joe-Jim is conjured by Jonas's Double Lunar Dogs motif: a crest of two dog heads (figs. 4.6-7). In the Berkeley performance, Jonas is "surrounded by, or rescued by, three Double Lunar Dogs, who hold banners with emblems of double dog heads on new moons" (they are joined by an actual dog as a German shepherd leapt up the ramp) (fig. 4.2).[43] This image of a double-headed dog resting on a crescent moon is emblazoned on banners during the various performances. A painted line traces the heads of two dogs emerging back to back from a new moon that serves as their shared shoulder. The dogs crane in opposite directions with ears perked, their long necks echoing the shape of the moon. Rendered in thick, gestural lines, each dog possesses a hint of a smile and a knowing droop to the eyelids. This twinned emblem reverberates in other doubled images that comprise the set of *Double Lunar Dogs*. In one of the early sequences of the performance, two women paint each other's portraits on panes of glass (fig. 4.8). Other paintings on banners hung around the stage are also doubled: the abstracted images slightly offset in two different colors (fig. 4.9). Jonas initiated this technique of offset painting on screens in *Upside Down and Backwards* (1979), a performance and video based on two interwoven fairy tales (fig. 4.10). The

[41] Heinlein, *Universe*, 30.
[42] Heinlein, *Universe*, 40.
[43] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 122.

painted screens give the impression that by looking at the performance area, one is seeing double. As Jonas has said, the double lines represent "an ambiguous optical concern."[44] As the colored lines interacted with different shades of light, the screens produced a 3-D effect.[45] Yet Jonas remarked that these doubled stage sets had another significance: "those two lines in the drawing represent the story, and what I'm doing next to it."[46] Reflecting the duality of the narrative and its actualization, these offset designs mark the stage as a split place: dislocated between storyline and performance. Presided over by the Double Lunar Dogs floating on their crescent moon, whatever presences emerge here will not be unitary. Rather, they are telepresences: divided, like Joe-Jim, between self and other, here and there.

Double Lunar Dogs premiered on the heels of a number of experimental performances and videos dealing with outer space in the late 1970s. A sampling from The Kitchen's calendar during the latter years of the decade gives an indication of the interest in intergalactic activity and science fiction as performance material: Nina Canal and Robert Appleton's *Lunar Loneliness* (1977), Peter Grass's *Winter Slide Fiction* (1978) ("Slide show with soundtrack of semi-science fiction and biblical themes on a romantic leash"), and Luigi Ontani's *Astronaut: Tableaux Vivants* (1979) ("Dressed in a shiny space suit, Ontani will levitate…in a startling evocation of interstellar travel").[47] Anticipating Jonas's use of NASA footage in *Double Lunar Dogs*, videos collected in a 1977 exhibition at the Kitchen titled "Earth, Moon, Mars and Jupiter: Video from

[44] Joan Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979." *View* Vol. II No. I (April 1979), 19.
[45] Jonas, "Upside Down and Backwards," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 99.
[46] Jonas in "Joan Jonas: Interview by Robin White at Crown Point Press, Oakland, California, 1979," 19.
[47] The Kitchen Archives, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Calendars, Press Releases etc. Box 77, Folder 2 and 5.

Interplanetary Space," correlated televisual technology with new capabilities for viewing outer space. Leslie Schiff's 1977 video installation *Saturn, Planet of the Moons* included a telescope attached to a monitor while Barbara Latham, John Manning, and Edward Rankus's 1979 tape *Alien Nation* intermixed scifi images, textbook diagrams, special effects, and scenes from everyday life. Such performances and videos were made alongside the profusion of science fiction films of the 1970s that exist somewhere on the spectrum of political critique and utterly bizarre journeys into interstellar leftfield: *Sleeper* (1973), *Soylent Green* (1973), *Zardoz* (1974), and *The Man Who Fell To Earth* (1976), to name just a few. As Peter Wright has pointed out, such films proliferated before Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and George Lucas's *Star Wars* (both 1977) inaugurated a new era of effects-driven scifi blockbusters.[48] Artistic engagements with science fiction were also bound up with the so-called "New Wave" of science fiction: a hotbed of experimental narrative that raised existential questions related not only to technologies of the not to distant future, but also new formations of identity.

Though Jonas reaches back to Heinlein, a member of the scifi old guard, *Double Lunar Dogs* appeared during the flowering of feminist science fiction the 1970s and 80s. Beginning in the 1960s, science fiction's New Wave initiated an experimental approach to form and content that departed from both pulp fiction and what is considered the "Golden Age" of scifi around World War II (including Heinlein and Asimov). The New Wave marked a break with the conventions of science fiction as a male dominated genre.[49] The 1970s witnessed the emergence of women writers such as Margaret Atwood,

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[48] Peter Wright, "Film and Television, 1960-1980," in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction,* 92.

[49] Gwyneth Jonas, "Feminist SF," in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction,* 484. As James writes, up until this point, "[w]omen writers and fans were a disproportionally

Octavia Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, as well as James Tiptree Jr., who, in 1976, was revealed to be Alice Bradley Sheldon (Sheldon wrote under a variety of other pseudonyms, including Raccoona). "Women can't write—using the old myths," Russ declared in 1971. "But using new ones—?"[50] Science fiction offered a mode of storytelling that could fill the blank space posed by Russ. At the time she was developing *Double Lunar Dogs*, Jonas was reading Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, a science fiction novel published that 1969 that weaves a new mythology around a planet where gender does not exist.[51] As a female human ethnologist who visits the planet conjectures, the missing male subjectivity accounts for the inability of this genderless culture to go to war. As the ethnologist observes, "there is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be found to be lessened, or changed, on Winter."[52] The "aliens" encountered on the planet of Winter embody this non-dualistic nature: they are both/and.

As Luckhurst has written, one facet of science fiction's New Wave was the "turn from muscular adventures in outer space to psychological examination of *inner space*."[53] This was first articulated by J.G. Ballard in "Which Way to Inner Space?," a manifesto published as a guest editorial in *New Worlds* in 1962. Here Ballard wrote that science fiction "should turn its back on space, on interstellar travel, extra-terrestrial life forms,

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effective minority group, often hiding behind initials or male pseudonyms; always 'invisible' to the perception of sf as an exclusively male activity. Until this point, female fans and authors (often writing under pen names) constituted a minority."

[50] Quoted in Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, 180.

[51] Jonas Archive (Notebook 36, c. 1979-1980)

[52] Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), (New York: Penguin, 2010), 100.

[53] Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, 142.

galactic wars" because "it is *inner* space, not outer, that needs to be explored."[54] Ballard's ideas were elaborated in Leslie Fiedler's 1965 essay "The New Mutants." As Luckhurst writes, quoting Fiedler: "The 'conquest of inner space' by poets, junkies and schizophrenics appeared to contribute to an era that was itself somehow science-fictional: 'The post-human future is now.'"[55] In her transition to scifi at the turn of the 1970s, the novelist Doris Lessing would take up these ideas: her 1971 novel *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, which examines the science fictional landscape of the mind of an amnesiac man committed to a mental institution was prefaced with the following: "Category: Inner-space fiction / For there is never anywhere to go but in."[56]

Beginning with Ballard, this "was the sort of subjectivist, anti-technocratic Modernist writing that Robert Heinlein had denounced as 'a sick literature' of 'neurotics' and 'sex maniacs.'"[57] Jonas, in adapting Heinlein's "muscular adventure," turns the story into an examination of inner space: a divided interior host to a subjectivity that is not present to itself. In this sense *Double Lunar Dogs* is akin to Valie EXPORT's 1976 film *Invisible Adversaries*, which is considered a feminist reauthorizing of a vintage science fiction narrative: the 1956 film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which Jonas watched in preparation for her own piece.[58] In her film EXPORT also engaged the conquest of inner space, as the protagonist believes the minds of the people around her are being colonized by alien beings, rendering each person ambiguously double—host to invisible parasites.

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[54] J.G. Ballard "Which Way to Inner Space?" *New Worlds* 118 (1962), 117.
[55] Luckhurst, *Science Fiction,* 147. Leslie Fiedler, "The New Mutants" (1965), in *Collected Essays* II, 379-400.
[56] Doris Lessing, *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (London: Grafton, 1972), title page.
[57] Luckhurst, *Science Fiction,* 142.
[58] Chris Holmlund, "Feminist Makeovers: The Celluloid Surgery of Valie Export and Su Friedrich," in *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, ed. Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1979-1980).

By mediating old-fashioned explorations of outer space with the investigation of inner space, Jonas took up the uncanny experience of telepresence—not simply through technologies, as Minsky envisioned, but through their dramaturgical deployment.

The Presence of the Actor

Waldo is a story framed by performance. The beginning and end of Heinlein's narrative take place at Waldo's ballet performance. Having learned how to harness occult energies that endow him with physical strength, Waldo no longer needs his robotic prostheses and remote control instruments. Soon he is not only able to withstand gravity but also move with a superhuman virtuosity. He returns to earth and becomes a renowned ballet dancer (as well as a surgeon). The story opens with Waldo mid-performance—"There was a breath-catching silence as he leaped high into the air, higher than a human being should—and performed, while floating there, a fantastically improbable *entrechats douze*"—and ends with reporters fawning over him in his dressing room as he regards a poster of himself costumed as Harlequin.[59] On one level, Heinlein is sending up his protagonist, who is a fool for his audiences. He only performs live, feeding off the adoring applause just as he once relied on his multitude of robotic hands. On another level, that Waldo ends up on the stage and that this stage serves as the text's framing device invites the consideration of how the story as a whole might be read in terms of performance. It begs the question, in other words, of how telepresence was initially conceived as a mode of performance.

[59] Heinlein, *Waldo*, 1, 154.

The quintessential bodily presence of ballet would seem to contrast with the remote operation of robotic appendages. And yet by the end of the story, the reader is aware that Waldo's "fantastically improbable" physical capabilities that rivet his audiences are indebted to his ability to, with each movement, tap into that parallel "Other Space." When Waldo completes twelve entrechats (normally a just few airborne crossings at the ankle are considered virtuosic), his sheer physicality may seem simply present in all its splendor, but his very appearance on stage relies on his body being both here *and* there: the stage and the Other Space. Waldo's riven "stage presence" then mirrors and remediates his performance of operating the waldoes, which, while also requiring a virtuosic physical dexterity—his "unhurried skill" and "sensitive touch"—more clearly distributed action at a distance. Waldo's physical attunement to the machines generates an intense presence that is always shared, dividing self (Waldo and waldo) and displacing place (outer space and earth). As the false dichotomy between Waldo the ballet dancer and Waldo the remote manipulator suggests, the presence seemingly proper to performance and "telepresence" have more in common that meets the eye.

Given the role of performance in Heinlein's text that inspired Minsky's article, it is perhaps no coincidence that Minsky's own narrative rendering of telepresence begins with an act of costuming. "You don a comfortable jacket lined with sensors and muscle-like motors" (fig. 4.11). With this investment, one becomes two. "Each motion of your arm, hand, and fingers is reproduced at another place by mobile, mechanical hands." Gestures are mirrored, spacing the body between here and there. The body is no longer a sealed container, a thing that takes up one place at a time. "Light, dexterous, and strong,

these hands have their own sensors through which you see and feel what is happening." Sensory feedback is shared, a circuit between self and other: *presence at a distance*. On the one hand, this form of distributing presence across space is not a technological reality (though it may well be a possibility); it remains the stuff of science fiction. On the other hand, before the founding of any artificial intelligence lab, the possibility of presence at a distance has been probed, investigated, and elaborated since at least the time of the ancient Greeks in the laboratory of theater. While theater may at first appear more closely aligned with the fabulations of science fiction, it exists as a fulcrum between the mechanics of fictional narrative and the technological conditions that underpin the concept of telepresence.

Theater is an art form founded on presence. At the same time, theater poses the fundamental problem of where that presence is located. A live drama promises to enthrall because of shared presence: between spectators and actors as well as between the actor and the character she artfully figures forth. Theater historian Erika Fischer-Lichte describes this ideal theatrical scenario during a performance of Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* in Berlin, directed by Heiner Müller and starring Martin Wuttke as Ui. A spectator herself, Fischer-Lichte watches both the play and the audience: "They looked absolutely spellbound — obviously experiencing the intense presence of the actor as well as themselves as being intensely present."[60] Despite its intensity, this presence "appearing in the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators" inherent to theater is no straightforward matter.[61] Judging from their reactions to the actor over the course of the

[60] Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Appearing as embodied mind - defining a weak, a strong and a radical concept of presence," in *Archaeologies of Presence*, ed. Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks. (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 104.
[61] Fischer-Lichte, "Appearing as embodied mind,"106.

performance, Fischer-Lichte observes how the audience both seemed to distinguish between actor (Wuttke) and dramatic figure (Ui) and experience them as one presence (Wuttke/Ui). This leads her to examine what, exactly, constitutes the "presence of the actor." The compelling performance of Wuttke/Ui, she writes, "posed the question of whether presence is to be ascribed to the actor, to his phenomenal body, his bodily being in the world, or to the dramatic figure he is representing, and thus to his semiotic body." As Fischer-Lichte writes, drawing on the philosophy of Helmuth Plesser, "the one cannot exist without the other." The presence of the actor, in other words, is always a composite of his phenomenal and semiotic body. The "tension between the two" crystallized in the appearance of the actor as a divided presence—Wuttke/Ui—"marks the de-centered position of human beings, i.e. their capacity to distance themselves to themselves."[62] Rather than a location of presence as such, the theater more precisely stages presence at a distance as the condition of embodiment, relationality, and location itself—or, as Samuel Weber has theorized, *dis*location.[63]

In 1984, the year that Jonas completed the video version of *Double Lunar Dogs*, Weber began to formulate a theory of theater that sought to reconcile the stage's claims to presence with the way that it divides the identity of place and person. In his opera review titled "Taking Place: Toward a Theory of Dislocation," Weber identified the essential ability of the theater to install a split into both site (the physical stage and what it represents) and self (the actor and whom she represents)—representational partitions that structure what he calls "a theater of dislocation." "The drama of this theater can no longer be described as the visualization of events on a stage; the space of the spectacle

[62] Fischer-Lichte, "Appearing as embodied mind," 106.
[63] Samuel Weber, "Taking Place: Toward a Theory of Dislocation," *Enclitic* vol. VIII, no. 1-2 (Spring/Fall 1984), 124-143.

can no longer be taken for granted, for its structuring partitions partake in the scene they permit to take place. It is, in short, the drama of *taking place*."[64] Here Weber redefines a measure of presence—that which is taking place on stage—as a process of displacement, of disturbing any unity of place. As Weber later wrote, theater is not simply a space where drama takes place; it "entails not just *space* but, more precisely, its disruption and rearrangement. In other words, *theatricality emerges where space and place can no longer be taken for granted or regarded as self-contained*."[65] This "disruption and rearrangement" of space that theater creates is rooted in the fact that "everything that takes place onstage relates, constitutively, to what has taken and will take place offstage, which is to say, on *other stages*."[66] As the playwright and director Richard Foreman has put it: "Theater is presence and absence. Someone or something is either onstage, or offstage."[67] This divisibility of theatrical space also pertains to the problematic presence of the actor observed by Fischer-Lichte: "every speech onstage is already an echo and a repetition of a 'part' inscribed elsewhere, which must be remembered in order to be spoken, yet which exists only in being spoken. The utterable *divisibility* of 'representing' thus contaminates the *visibility* of the represented.[68] Though, as Weber notes, theater and theatricality seem to "presuppose, as one of their indispensable preconditions, some sort of real, immediate, physical presence," the stage is rather founded on the conditions of

[64] Weber, "Taking Place," 141.
[65] Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 300.
[66] Weber, *Theatricality as Medium,* 185.
[67] Richard Foreman, "Foundations for a Theater," *Unbalancing Acts: Foundations for a Theater*, 9.
[68] Weber, *Theatricality as Medium,* 185.

telepresence: a presence that is divided and spaced between places and selves, which can "no longer be taken for granted or regarded as self-contained."[69]

Weber's later writings on theater correlate what he began to theorize in the early 1980s as "the theater of dislocation" with the displacements wrought by teletechnologies. Weber asks how, in "an age increasingly dominated by electronic media, a certain *theatricality* seems not only to survive, but even to reemerge with renewed force and transformed significance."[70] Electronic technologies, Weber writes, have the ability to "transform traditional experiences of space and time, of distance and proximity, and hence of bodies, which in great part are defined through their spatio-temporal mode of being situated." This would seem to be at odds with theater, with its apparent "recourse to the opposition between presence and absence as well as to that of proximity and distance in the situating of bodies, especially *living* bodies."[71] As Weber argues, these categories are precisely what theater began to destabilize long before the advent of electricity. Television's ambivalent simultaneity echoes the dislocated nature of theatrical presence, for instance, as TV "overcomes spatial distance but only by *splitting the unity of place* and with it the unity of everything that defines its identity with respect to place: events, bodies, subjects."[72] In bridging here and there, television, like theater, interpolates that distance into bodily presence, dividing its presumed unity.

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[69] Weber, *Theatricality as Medium,* 1.
[70] Samuel Weber, "Displacing the Body: The Question of Digital Democracy," lecture in Los Angeles, May, 2, 1996, archived by Hydra http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/weber/displace.html
[71] Weber, *Theatricality as Medium,* 99. Weber's emphasis here is to highlight that "bodies" does not simply refer to human bodies; a generalization he writes must be questioned to fully explore the relation between theater and electronic media (379n1).
[72] Weber, "Television: Set and Screen," in *Mass Mediauras*, 117.

In Weber's analysis, electronic media amplify ambivalences of identity and place at play in Western theater since it was first theorized in Aristotle's *Poetics*. In addition to Aristotle and others, Weber traces these ambivalences to Nietzsche's writings on Greek drama in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here Nietzsche defined "the originary dramatic phenomenon" as "seeing oneself altered before one's very eyes and now acting, as though one had really entered into another body, another character. This process, this trial marks the beginning of the unfolding of drama…Here already there is an abandonment of the individual by entering into an alien nature."[73] For Weber, Nietzsche's theorization of Greek tragedy corresponds to the "dislocation" he views as inherent to theater. If the "originary dramatic phenomenon" as described by Nietzsche subtends the theater of dislocation, it also suggests "just how and why a certain theatricality could be compatible with the spread of contemporary, electronic media." As Weber argues, rather than "functioning as a closed container of equally self-contained bodies, the theatrical site splits, stretches, twists and turns into a space of alternation and oscillation…It is the space of a body that no longer takes its orders from the soul."[74] Individuals do not simply cease to exist in drama; "they exist, but as *dividuals*, divided between spectator and actor, alien and identical, entering into an alien body and soul, on the one hand, and remaining sufficiently detached to see itself in the process. The individual thus altered is both here and there, and yet neither simply here nor there, simply itself or simply other."[75] Weber here describes the experience of telepresence—"both here and there, and yet neither simply here nor there"—but also its unnerving potential addressed in science fiction but eschewed in technological development. For "that sense of 'being there'" desired by

[73] Quoted and translated by Weber, *Theatricality as Medium*, 40.
[74] Weber, "Displacing the Body," n.p.
[75] Weber, "Displacing the Body," n.p.

Minsky is what is required by the actor as she becomes alien to herself. If it is engaged in science fiction through extraterrestrial relations, this is also the experience tested in theater: "the abandonment of the individual by entering into an alien body and soul."

Decades before Weber and Fischer-Lichte addressed the problem of theatrical presence, enormous pressure had been placed on this category by the avant-garde challenges to traditional techniques of acting. "In theatre, drama and performance," theater historians have observed, "debates over the actor's presence have been at the heart of key aspects and theory since the late 1950s and a vital part of the discourses surrounding avant-garde and postmodern performance."[76] Inspired by Antonin Artaud, who rejected the hegemony of the theatrical text, experimental theater makers like Richard Schechner of The Performance Group and Judith Malina and Julian Beck of The Living Theater sought to liberate actors from roles prescribed by a script. (As Spalding Gray, an actor who worked with Schechner recalled, Schechner named his company The Performance Group precisely to disassociate performance from traditional acting).[77] As theater critic Elinor Fuchs has argued, the dissolution of character in theater of the late 1960s and 1970s was a response to concomitant critiques of subjectivity based on "a dispersed idea of self."[78] "Nothing 'out there,' no one 'in here,'" Fuchs reflects. "The interior space known as 'the subject' was no longer an essence, an in-dwelling human endowment, but flattened into a social construction or marker in language, the

[76] *Archaeologies of Presence*, ed. Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks. (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 2.
[77] Spalding Gray, "About Three Places in Rhode Island," *The Drama Review: TDR,* Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 1979), 32.
[78] Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 9.

unoccupied occupant of the subject position."[79] She cites Hélène Cixous' 1974 essay "The Character of 'Character,'" in which Cixous drew on theater to critique a unitary understanding of the self: "The 'I' must stop purporting to be a 'true subject' and reveal itself as a succession of masks." "I," wrote Cixous, "must become a 'fabulous opera.'"[80] Theatrical character could cut both ways, then, serving as a model for dispersed subjectivity as well as a mimetic representation of personhood that needed to be dismantled.

The pressure placed on the traditional theatrical devices of character and narrative and practices of acting and directing contributed to the birth of performance art as distinct from theater at the turn of the 1970s. In contrast to theatrical character, which hinges on the distribution of presence across the dually phenomenal and semiotic body of the actor, performance appeared to create no rift between the lived self and the performed self. In 1979, Michael Kirby, then editor of *TDR*, defined performance art as a mode of "autoperformance": "presentations conceived and performed by the same person."[81] The notion of autoperformance contributed to a sense of *presence* of the performer, who was no longer beholden to preexisting textual dictates of plot and role. Kirby cited Jonas among other performers like Vito Acconci, Adrian Piper, and Spalding Gray. Though Gray trained as an actor, because of his autobiographical performances beginning with *Three Places in Rhode Island* (1975-1978), the plays he developed with LeCompte as the newly formed The Wooster Group, he was often associated with both theater and performance art. In the 1980s, he would develop the first-person monologues for which

[79] Fuchs, *The Death of Character*, 3.
[80] Quoted in Fuchs, *The Death of Character,* 18.
[81] Michael Kirby, "Autoperformance Issue: An Introduction," *The Drama Review: TDR* Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 1979), 2.

he is best known. Michael Vanden Heuvel has dismissively remarked that an examination of "Gray's acting method reveals that it shares the same solipsistic and apolitical attitudes that characterize performance theater of the seventies."[82] As in Jonas's Organic Honey series, the particular ability of performance art to examine the self and explore identity was often labeled as narcissistic—when, as Gray put it, "we *used* self-consciousness and narcissism in the pieces, and, in so doing, avoided self-indulgence."[83]

As her inclusion in Kirby's article suggests, Jonas no doubt served as a model for performers looking to get away from traditional acting techniques. Organic Honey, for instance, was ambiguously related to both Jonas's intimate psychology and the cultural roles offered to women—as her mass-produced, yet seductively transparent mask attested. "A new confrontation between self and other began within me," Gray wrote in 1979, echoing Jonas's articulation of Organic Honey as her opposite. "I wanted to explore myself as other."[84] Yet, at the moment that Kirby and others sought to codify performance art at the close of the 1970s (Roselee Goldberg's influential *Performance Art*, for instance, was published in 1979), Jonas looked precisely to theater. While Jonas was no stranger to theater—she lived adjacent to The Performing Garage and frequented plays by the likes of Robert Wilson and the Squat Theater—in the late 1970s she began to introduce more overtly theatrical techniques into her own performance work. Particularly as this more concerted, heuristic engagement with theater coincided with science fiction in *Double Lunar Dogs*, I suggest that theater offered a model of telepresence that had

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[82] Michael Vanden Heuvel, *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Performance: Alternative Theater and the Dramatic Text* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 115.
[83] Gray, "About Three Places," 36.
[84] Gray, "About Three Places," 35. Rather than a character existing outside of himself, Gray wrote: "The 'other' was the other in me, the constant witness, the constant consciousness of self."

already been at work in Jonas's performances as they were born with video since the turn of the 1970s. While performance would become associated with presence—the coincidence of the performer and her (non)character—theater, founded on the ability that one could be two people at once, always exists between presence and absence. As Craig Owens observed in an article on Wilson (that Jonas annotated in her journal): "Theatrical representation establishes itself in that rift which it alone creates between the tangible presence of the performer and that absence which is necessarily implicated in any concept of imitation or signification."[85] With *Double Lunar Dogs*, Jonas brought the lens of science fiction to theater as a laboratory of telepresence. At the same time, she introduced video to the stage, illuminating and renewing the ancient attributes of theater that Weber has argued so clearly resonate with electronic media.

Around 1976, Jonas began to experiment with theatrical devices of narrative and character. Before she adapted Heinlein's science fiction story into a performance script in 1980, she reworked fairy tales into theatrical narratives with a set of roles played by herself and others. Her first concerted engagement with theatrical techniques was in the initial version of *The Juniper Tree* in 1976, in which a fairy tale was presented, as Jonas described it, as "a play within in a play."[86] (Earlier in 1976, Jonas considered asking the playwright and director Richard Foreman to write a script).[87] "Beginning with *The Juniper Tree*," critic John Howell observed, Jonas "added 'theater'—narrative, character, and psychology—to her self reflexive vocabulary."[88] The performance was originally designed for an audience of children at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.

[85] Craig Owens, "'Einstein on the Beach': The Primacy of Metaphor," *October* 4 (Autumn 1977), 3. Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1978-1979).
[86] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (children's version)," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 98.
[87] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976).
[88] John Howell, "Swing on a star," *The Soho News* (December 22, 1981), n.p.

Jonas took a childlike approach to performing the text and embodying the characters, appropriate for the given audience but also related to her interests in games and ritual. "Various scenes are playacted—the way children might present them—while a reader sits at left reading a story along with the performance."[89] This reader was the poet Susan Howe, an old friend of Jonas's who had recommended the fairy tale about a prototypical dysfunctional family. *The Juniper Tree* included a range of female parts, including a benevolent mother who dies, a wicked stepmother who kills her stepson, and a daughter who avenges her brother. "With the fairy tale, I was once again looking to see what roles women play and how they are represented," Jonas later wrote. "Again it is an exploration of self."[90] In this sense *The Juniper Tree* continued the investigation of female identity initiated by Organic Honey. Yet the textual component of the later piece more pointedly begged the question of acting: negotiating the distance between the self and a preexisting character. "Previously I created the characters with masks and disguises, now there is an attempt at doing the same with gesture, mood, 'acting,'" Jonas wrote in her notes for the performance. "Now there is the added dimension of relating to a particular character in a story."[91]

As Jonas developed *The Juniper Tree*, she became increasingly engaged with theatrical devices of narrative, staging, and acting. As Jonas later wrote, the 1977 iteration of the piece at The Kitchen took shape as "a very theatrical collaboration in the style of Chinese opera. Two of the people I worked with—Lindzee Smith and Tim

[89] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (children's version)," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 98.
[90] Jonas, "Transmission," in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 127.
[91] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976).

Burns—had worked in theater in Australia."[92] The later solo version, in which Jonas played all of the parts herself, coincided with her taking a role in The Wooster Group's *Nayatt School* in 1978. Jonas recalls acting in The Wooster Group's play and then running home to perform *The Juniper Tree*.[93] Aside from performing in Robert Frank and Rudy Wurlitzer's 1975 film *Keep Busy*—which, considering that the cast was stranded on an island in Nova Scotia for three days, was perhaps somewhat anarchic—this was the first time that Jonas had the experience of being directed.[94] "It is interesting to see myself in the movie—I liked it," Jonas noted in her journal after watching *Keep Busy*. "Do more gestures, movement, choreography, *scenes* of *acting*."[95] As Jonas later related to Joan Simon, "I reached a certain point in my performing that if I was to go on I wanted to use my voice and my body in a different way, a way more related to acting."[96] In her notes, Jonas grappled with what might characterize a more distinctly theatrical mode of performance. "What for me is acting," Jonas jotted in a notebook from 1978-1979: "ask everyone, make a tape … always acting?"[97]

While performing in *Nayatt School*, Jonas would have the chance to address this question experientially (fig. 4.12). The final installment in *Three Places in Rhode Island*, a series of plays based on Gray's growing up in Rhode Island and relationship with his family, *Nayatt School* was bound up with Gray's autobiography. Akin to *The Juniper Tree*, which was initially performed for children, in order to facilitate the link to Gray's

[92] Jonas, "The Juniper Tree (collaborative version)," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 241.
[93] Jonas in Conversation with Rebecca Cleman, Anthology Film Archives, September 21, 2017.
[94] Jonas, in conversation with the author, August 10, 2017; and in conversation with Cleman, September 21, 2017.
[95] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1976)
[96] Jonas in Joan Simon, "Scenes and Variations: An Interview with Joan Jonas," *Art in America* 83, no.7 (July 1995), 78.
[97] Joan Jonas Archive (Notebook dated 1978-1979).

own childhood, *Nayatt School* was partially developed through workshops with a group of five- to seven-year-olds and eventually featured four eleven-year-olds. These kids played adults in the last scene of T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, a drama in which Gray had performed in his early twenties that was included as a play within a play in *Nayatt School*. Jonas also had a part in *The Cocktail Party* scene: she played the part of Celia Coplestone, "a female character that," in Gray's words, "was articulate about her 'madness'" (and whom he associated with his mother).[98] Jonas was cast in this more conventional role of Celia embedded within an experimental play, in part, because she was not an actor. "Joan Jonas—metaphor of non-actress for role of Celia, disenchantment and disconnection, playing scene well but not necessarily 'acting style thing,'" noted the actor Libby Howe during rehearsals.[99] "Joan Jonas had seemed like the perfect Celia to me," Gray wrote, "so we asked her to 'play' the role."[100] Gray, meanwhile, took the role of the psychiatrist Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, who interviews Celia and sets her on a path of spiritual salvation in Eliot's play. As Gray described, *The Cocktail Party* "scene became a kind of Brechtian reading," in which LeCompte directed him and to perform the script by reading through it and stopping to "point out to the audience certain phrases and passages that were close to me and to her and that spoke about our actual feelings about the text and what it represented to us."[101] On the one hand, this technique had the effect of personalizing the material, of staging Gray and Jonas as themselves: "It was a personal statement for all of us."[102] On the other hand, as an acting technique developed

[98] Gray, "About Three Places," 41.
[99] Libby Howe's "Nayatt School Notebook" quoted in David Savran, *The Wooster Group, 1975-1985: Breaking the Rules* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 121.
[100] Gray, "About Three Places," 42.
[101] Gray, "About Three Places," 42.
[102] Gray, "About Three Places," 42.

by Bertolt Brecht, in which the actor observes her character and comments on her lines rather than enacting the script in an illusionistic manner, it had the effect of disrupting any notion of stable presence—personal or fictional.

Perhaps inspired by performing in this scene, Jonas annotated Brecht's 1936 essay "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" in her journal around 1978. "One is not *actually* the character, but one *shows* it," Jonas wrote, referring to Brecht's argument that the actor should not feed into the dramatic illusion that he *is* the character but actively disrupt that illusion by maintaining a distance from his role. Aware that he is being observed by the audience (and therefore breaking the illusion of the fourth wall fundamental to Western theater), the actor should become, as Jonas notes, "an observer of his own actions."[103] Playing a character, for Brecht, meant existing on stage as two people at once: a dislocation between self and other, here and there, that does not resolve into an illusory or mimetic relationship. As Brecht maintained, the actor should not assume "another's facial expression at the cost of erasing his own," but should "show the two faces overlapping."[104] This doubling of the actor's presence resonated with Gray's style of performance, in which, as Schechner has described, "some of his 'real-self' was engaged directly, not used as in character-actor training as a way to invest the character, but side by side with the character."[105] This doubling from within the presence of the actor characterized what David Savran has described as the way that in *Nayatt School*, the actors "never become the characters they play, remaining simply the medium used to

[103] Jonas Archive (Notebook 35, 1978-1979)
[104] Bertolt Brecht, *The Messingkauf Dialogues* (1942). Quoted in Fuchs, 32.
[105] Quoted in Nick Kaye, *Art into Theatre: Performance Interviews and Documents* (London: Routledge, 1996), 165.

produce them."[106] If this evokes Jonas's mystical notion of the performer as a medium, it also lays bare the mechanics of theater, in which the presence of the actor is always riven. "As a result of the gulf between actor and role," Savran writes, "the possibility of meaning is always being disseminated across a wild proliferation, across a series of doubles."[107] Savran calls actors in the play "dancers in the choreography of displacement," echoing Weber's idea of the theater of displacement, in which the presence of the actor is continually divided.[108]

By reading the text of *The Cocktail Party*, an earlier recording of which was also played on a phonograph earlier in the play, The Wooster Group appeared to recover the dramatic text that had been rejected by experimental theater. Yet, as Fuchs has observed, reading on stage dovetailed with what has become the Group's signature multimedia theater.[109] As Fuchs argues, the particular way that "actors may read books aloud, play scenes with colleagues represented on video screens, or quote taped lines spoken elsewhere rather than enact them" serves to "interrupt the illusion of presence."[110] *Nayatt School*, for instance, included super-8 film projections and a record player on stage. "Characters, media and props proliferate and commandeer the space," Savran describes: "the live performers play a multiplicity of roles; the live action is doubled by a film of a previous performance, maraschino cherries, plastic glasses and old record players

[106] Savran, *The Wooster Group,* 114.
[107] Savran, *The Wooster Group,* 115.
[108] Savran, *The Wooster Group,* 115.
[109] Fuchs, *The Death of Character*, 85. The Wooster Group's engagement with the theatrical text marks a transition from Schechner's Performance Group to tactics of the Wooster Group. As Fuchs observes, the "numerous plays and performance pieces beginning in the 1970s project writing back onto the stage performance in a…literalization or textualization of the theatrical event." Rather than a return than a return to theatrical order, this "textualization" served to "complicate the spectator's experience of theatrical presence" (74).
[110] Fuchs, *The Death of Character*, 12.

multiply maniacally."[111] As the combination of technologies with the reading of *The Cocktail Party* script suggests, The Wooster Group's interruption of the "illusion of presence" was related to an elaboration of the telepresence long native to theater.

Following *Three Places in Rhode Island*, The Wooster Group would begin to integrate closed-circuit televisions into their media repertoire. Video has become integral to what Philip Auslander has identified as The Wooster Group's "strategic deconstruction of presence" in plays that recreate "the flow of mediatized culture" on stage.[112] The Group initially incorporated video into the theatrical mise-en-scène in *Route 1 & 9* (1981). The first scene of this play, which also included live telephone calls, consisted of a videotaped lecture by Ron Vawter on Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, which was a source for *Route 1 & 9,* beside a miniature version of the theatrical set.[113] The Wooster Group has since deepened their engagement with video, which continues to be a key element in their productions. Actors perform, for instance, while looking at and listening to video feeds shown on monitors facing the stage that are only partially visible to the audience. As it is piped into their ears, this live feed creates a mediated rift within the actor's subjectivity that becomes palpable over the course of the performance: they are both there and not there, present and absent. "What one can read in The Wooster Group's performance is that the subject, displaced in video and performance simultaneously, is equally present in both," Matthew Causey has observed. "The mediated and the live are neither what they were, nor are they only one or the other. They have formed a discrete aesthetic form: the tele-performative, which presents performance at a distance, presence

[111] Savran, *The Wooster Group,* 105.
[112] Philip Auslander, *Presence and Resistance: Postmodern and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 83.
[113] Savran, *The Wooster Group,* 15.

at a distance."[114] What Causey identifies as "the tele-performative" is not isolated to the Group's experimental plays, it is rather drawn out of the longer history of theater as well as performance art as it was born with video in the 1970s. LeCompte has named Jonas as a primary influence for bringing video technology into the Group's productions.[115] In turn, Jonas would feed theatrical techniques back into her own mediated performances, elaborating the significance of telepresence signaled by her influential inclusion of video screens on stage.

In *Double Lunar Dogs*, which Jonas first performed two years after *Nayatt School* and in which she invited Gray to act, she merged her engagement with theater with characters and narrative drawn from science fiction. Inspired by Heinlein's tale, it is perhaps no coincidence that aspects of the way she staged the performance echoed Minsky's idea of telepresence, which was also inspired by Heinlein. Following the initial performance at the Berkeley Art Museum in 1980, Jonas added "significant actions," including, as she has described, "a live performer having a conversation with a performer seen in prerecorded tape on the video monitor, tin props representing robot dolls that I dance with, among other things."[116] A photograph of a version of *Double Lunar Dogs* performed at the Teatro del Falcone in Genoa, Italy in 1981 captures these later additions (fig. 4.13).[117] The photograph shows Jonas holding a silver "robot doll" beside a video monitor displaying the image of David Warrilow. The doll has a mirrored surface and

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[114] Matthew Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From simulation to embeddedness* (London: Routledge, 2006), 45.
[115] Elizabeth LeCompte in conversation with Hilton Als, Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, April 24, 2014.
[116] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 270.
[117] The photograph is published in *Scripts and Descriptions*. In this book it is labeled Genazzano, but a nearly identical photograph (that does not capture the video monitor in the frame) published in the later *In the Shadow a Shadow* is labeled Genoa, 1981.

eyes that are doubled, as if caught in movement. The robot's face, crowned with a crescent moon, is visible in a different photo of the performance in Genoa (fig. 4.14). Here Jonas holds the prop vertically in front of her body, as if the doll was replacing her on stage. This incomplete substitution is amplified by the double shadow cast by the doll's hand on the stage floor: echoing, in surface and shadow, the mirroring hands of telepresence. The robot doll makes an appearance in the video version of *Double Lunar Dogs* (fig. 4.15). The robot's golden foil hand (complete with red manicure) is seen "holding" a magnifying glass over a heart that Jonas has viscerally cut and splayed open. Then the full body of the robot appears, manipulated by another body behind her. The two figures stand before a doubled red and yellow image in the background. In the live version at The Performing Garage, Kroesen, who played Jonas's double, also performed as the robot. As critic John Howell described in his review of the performance, "Kroesen performed a little song and dance to a burbling organ riff while wearing a life-size doll cutout made out of tin."[118] In addition to the "robot doll," the photograph from Genoa also shows Warrilow on screen. In this version, Jonas interacted with the video footage of Warrilow. In his review of the performance at The Performing Garage, Howell described how "short scenes alternated with video speeches by an 'authority,' (the inimitable David Warrilow). On two monitors placed on the floor, he appeared as a talking head backed by truly unearthly colors, stunningly filmed by Michael Oblowitz. This official lectured the women: 'Keep out of the upper levels….Stay out of the corridors….Avoid the mutant renegades called Double Lunar Dogs….You are not to inquire or speculate in this way again.'"[119] Within the doubled set, the two monitors further divide Warrilow's telepresent

[118] Howell, "Swing on a star," n.p.
[119] Howell, "Swing on a star," n.p.

appearance. They lorded over the stage as a strange and divided place populated by Jonas and her double along with the robot dolls—rudimentary extensions of the body akin to Minsky's remote control machines.

A deeper engagement with telepresence filtered both through theater and science fiction would come via Jonas's particular enactment of Heinlein's protagonists. In *Universe*, Hugh Hoyland is a plucky scientist who finds himself among the muties plotting to take over the direction of the ship, and Joe-Jim Gregory is the two-headed mutant who possesses the knowledge of "outer space" (i.e. that there is space outside the ship) as well as the ship's original mission. In Jonas's abstracted telling of Heinlein's story, the muties become Double Lunar Dogs: enigmatic figures that echo Joe-Jim's dual physicality. Jonas also translated the relationship between the curious protagonist and the wise mutant into an enigmatic subplot involving two women who are both doubles and adversaries (one of which is always played by Jonas). The women constantly engage one another: mirroring, dancing, speaking with one another, antagonizing one another, drawing each other's portraits and then fighting over the drawings (fig. 4.16). On one level, the two women dramatize the link between Hugh and Joe-Jim, particularly as Hugh comes to realize that he is potentially a mutie himself: an alien within. In the video version of the performance, the association of Jonas's double (played by Kroesen) with the Double Lunar Dogs is made more explicit as Jonas, wearing a colander helmet, attempts to wrangle and capture the wild Kroesen. The woman and the alien reconcile, watching their conflict together onscreen (fig. 4.17). This is also a staging of theatrical telepresence—the divided presence of the actor—as self and other visibly tangled on stage.

Toward the beginning of the initial performance of *Double Lunar Dogs*, the women lay down on one of two ramps placed at the center of the "spaceship," each facing the other from her sloping surface. Each wielded a paintbrush and a pane of glass. "They look through their 'windows' and outline the contours of each other's faces, making crude portraits on glass"[120] (fig. 4.8). These two portraits echoed the twinned portrait of the Double Lunar Dogs and the other offset paintings that made up the stage set. In the video version of the piece, the scene of Jonas and Kroesen painting one another's faces on clear surfaces is edited in such a way that the women appear to both mirror and spar with one another as they paint (fig. 4.18). "This is me. Who is she? I am here. Look at her. Who are you? Remember us?" We hear these lines and Jonas and Kroesen paint one another, but we do not see who speaks them: the pronouns and voices are distributed across them. Here Jonas replaced the mirrors she used in her earlier performances with panes of clear glass. Looking through them, the performer always sees another, whose image she registers on the transparent pane, the painted visage overlapping with her own. To recall Brecht's words: the actor should never put on "another's facial expression at the cost of erasing his own," but should "show the two faces overlapping."[121] If Jonas and her double mirror one another at a distance—at one point, they signal across the space with music boxes—evoking the mimetic relationship of remote control, they also stage the disturbing possibility within the speculative technology of telepresence: making one's body alien to itself to experience "that sense of really 'being there.'" Brecht's concept of alienation—the distance between oneself and

[120] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *Scripts and Descriptions*, 112.
[121] Quoted in Fuchs, *The Death of Character*, 32

the performed self—takes on a science fictional aspect as Jonas dramatizes acting as an alien encounter.

The fact that Jonas's aliens are dogs is not so idiosyncratic as it might at first appear. All of Jonas's dogs have been featured in her work, beginning with Sappho's role in *Organic Honey*. "When I first started, I included a dog in my work as a presence," Jonas later wrote. "I thought of the dog in relation to myth, the idea of the animal helper, a friend."[122] If the dog has been a familiar to Jonas, in *Double Lunar Dogs*, its animal otherness is evoked in mutated alien form. This makes sense for a performance about the vast reaches of space, because animals, along with aliens and machines, represent the horizons of long-distance communication. As John Durham Peters has written, as opposed to language, *communication*—the basis for teletechnological contact, beginning with telegraphic signals—is something that we share with machines, animals, and aliens. "A concept arising from settings in which the human presence was shielded or mediated, 'communication' has invited novel adventures of contact with particularly enigmatic others—animals, extraterrestrials, machines, texts, God," Peters writes. "As the presence of the human body became increasingly irrelevant for 'communication,' new and alien candidates to communicate with have offered themselves to our fellowship."[123] As a reformulation of bodily presence at a distance, telepresence engages these adventures (and fears) of contact. "Communication places us in affinity with all kinds of monstrous others—and selves."[124] Hence its link to science fiction, as well as to performance.

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[122] Jonas, "Dog," in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, 153.
[123] John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 228.
[124] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air,* 228.

Peters notes how "questions of the inhuman" raised by animals, technology, and extraterrestrials "often serve as allegories for social otherness—women, racial and sexual others, the insane, children, the senile, or one's own dear self."[125] This allegorical tendency was engaged and detourned by the feminist science fiction of the 1970s: racial others in Butler's *Kindred*, sexual others in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, neurobiological others in Lessing's *Briefing for A Descent into Hell*. Even Heinlein engaged the idea of social otherness through the muties. Le Guin has recalled how she learned to write science fiction from Virginia Woolf. She remembers "the authentic thrill of being absolutely *elsewhere*" incited by *Orlando: A Biography* (1925), Woolf's novel in which the protagonist switches gender halfway through, a malleability that Le Guin would include in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Le Guin was also particularly inspired by *Flush: A Biography* (1933), which Woolf wrote from a cocker spaniel's point of view. "Woolf gets inside a dog's mind, that is, a nonhuman brain, an alien mentality—very science-fictional if you look at it that way," Le Guin wrote. "I imagine Woolf looking down at her dog asleep beside the ratty armchair she wrote in and thinking *what are your dreams?*"[126] *Double Lunar Dogs* might be understood to stem from a similar line of questioning carried out through techniques of enactment.

[125] Peters, *Speaking Into the Air,* 229.
[126] Ursula K. Le Guin, "Learning to Write Science Fiction from Virginia Woolf," in *Words Are My Matter: Writings About Life and Books, 2000-2016* (Northampton: Small Beer Press, 2016), 95.

A Proscenium Arch of Satellites

In 1970, Marshall McLuhan shifted from using the phrase the "global village" to describe a universal field of simultaneous electronic relations to the "global theater." "Since Sputnik and the satellites, the planet is enclosed in a manmade environment that ends 'Nature' and turns the globe into a repertory theater to be programmed," McLuhan wrote. "Shakespeare at the Globe mentioning 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players' (As You Like It, Act II, Scene 7) has been justified by recent events that would have struck him as entirely paradoxical. The results of living inside a proscenium arch of satellites is that the young now accept the public spaces of the earth as role-playing areas. Sensing this, they adopt costumes and roles and are ready to 'do their thing' everywhere."[127] For McLuhan, satellites have renewed the Shakespearian adage "all the world's a stage," turning the globe into a theater where there is an ever present audience. This provides the continual possibility of performance, of "role-playing": an original technique of telepresence elaborated on a worldwide scale—being here, being there; being self, being other. Yet McLuhan also suggests that the global theater portends another phenomenon. "Living inside a proscenium arch of satellites" means existing in a world that is continually present to itself: the telepresent.

"You, the travelers, were born here and will die here. Everyone has forgotten where they came from and where they are going. And the spaceship that nurtures you hums on and on": the spaceship in *Double Lunar Dogs* is a microcosm of the absolute here and now, a continual, artificial presence. In the version of the performance script

[127] Marshall McLuhan, "Absurd, Theater of The," in *From Cliché to Archetype,* Marshall McLuhan with Wilfred Watson (New York: The Viking Press, 1970), 9-10.

published in *BOMB* that most closely based on the text of Heinlein's *Universe*, the woman (who replaces Heinlein's protagonist, Hugh Hoyland) pays a visit to the scientist (in the book, Lieutenant Nelson, Hugh's mentor). She asks him about the muties; he replies that she must never explore the upper levels of the ship, that she must "be instructed in right thinking." "But these visions of strange vistas and great distances where I am on the outside and not the inside," she replies. He dismisses her "destructive fantasies." "There is no trip, no earth, only the here and now on this ship," he tells her. As she "devours ancient texts on the track of an undefined secret—Basic Modern Physics" under the scientist's loose supervision, she is beset with "nagging flashes of blue over soft green fields—but she put aside such fantasies and plunged into the here and now."[128]

Heinlein has been critiqued as an author that valorizes the individual. This is true in both *Waldo* and *Universe*, where the protagonists rebel against the status quo to change the direction of society. This is particularly the case in *Universe*, where Hugh Hoyland is set apart from the rest of the passengers in his pursuit to continue the ship's original mission. To recall the phrase that Jonas dramatized by hanging from a swing high above the audience: "He hung alone at the center of the stellar universe."[129] The story is a classic progress narrative based on restoring the ship to its original direction. Yet this mission to disrupt the status quo takes on a different valence when considered in the context of the smooth functioning of the telepresent, the oppressive "here and now" of the ship with no past and no future. This futuristic purgatory is evoked in the last scene of the video version of *Double Lunar Dogs*, when the actor John Molloy paces inside a small room. He constantly looks down at his watch, but the low walls are painted with

[128] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *BOMB*, 33.
[129] Heinlein, *Universe*, 36.

unmoving clocks (fig. 4.19). In the performance, a "soothing voice" comes in over the "intercom": "Universal time is 5 o'clock, universal time is 6 o'clock, universal time is 7 o'clock…" This is a "here and now" that is collapsed into "there and then," snuffing out different temporalities and spatial demarcations in a colonization of the present.

The cantilevered balconies of the Berkeley Art Museum corresponded to the multilevel structure of the spaceship envisioned by Heinlein in *Universe*. Jonas later remarked on the link between the museum setting and the spacecraft: "I thought it was sort of like being in a museum in the future, where people have forgotten where they have come from and where they are going."[130] "Memory is erased," Jonas later wrote. "Eradication of memory is a metaphor for the present."[131] In this total presence, the urgency of "outer space" is recast as finding an outside to the ship that appears to encompass everything. This sense of outer space connects to the "Other Space" in *Waldo*, a parallel realm that offers an alternative, mystical source of energy just outside a world destroyed by radiation. It also correlates to the problem of finding an outside to the proscenium arch of satellites, to the constant operation of the remote control economy.

The overwhelming "here and now" of the spaceship in *Double Lunar Dogs* evokes the kind of total telepresence that is inseparable from what Jonathan Crary has theorized as the "24/7." Networked with telemedia in the service of a globalized economy that never sleeps, the 24/7 world is the late capitalist fruition of McLuhan's vision of a globe ever-present to itself that "celebrates a hallucination of presence." "It is a world identical to itself, a world with the shallowest of pasts," Crary writes. In such a self-identical world, "the homogeneity of the present is an effect of the fraudulent brightness

[130] Jonas, interviewed by Glueck, 22.
[131] Jonas, "Double Lunar Dogs," in *In the Shadow a Shadow,* 280.

that presumes to extend everywhere and preempt any mystery or unknowability."[132] Echoing the vast ship of *Universe* and *Double Lunar Dogs*, Crary invokes the glaringly lit space station in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 science fiction film *Solaris* as a microcosm of such a homogenous present which seems to extend everywhere "thus in principle without specters." Based on Stanislaw Lem's 1961 novel, most of the film unfolds on a space station orbiting the planet Solaris. The station is operated by a small crew of scientists studying the planet's bewitching sea, each of whom has fallen prey to debilitating psychological crises. When a psychologist is sent to investigate the stalled mission, he too becomes possessed by the mysterious condition. After catching glimpses of shadowy figures that are not part of the crew (but who are apparently also visible to the other cosmonauts), he is confronted by the startling presence of his dead wife aboard the ship, who, along with the other spectral visitors, haunts him and the scientists throughout the film. For Crary, the "spectral is, in some way, an intrusion or a disruption of the present by something out of time and by the ghosts of what has not been deleted by modernity, of victims who will not be forgotten, of unfulfilled emancipation."[133] The muties/Double Lunar Dogs are similarly spectral presences that haunt and potentially disrupt the total presence of the artificially all-encompassing spacecraft. In order to dislocate the totalizing here and now that has absorbed the there and then, these ghosts of what has been and could be also necessarily disturb the self-possession of the people who have sought to repress and eliminate them as alien. To welcome such a threatening, spectral presence from within—to "feel the drive to alter oneself and to speak out of alien

[132] Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London and New York: Verso, 2014), 29, 19.
[133] Crary, *24/7,* 19-20.

bodies and souls"—this is the resistant and potentially emancipatory potential of acting (and acting out) in the telepresent.

In addition to characterizing the neoliberal extension of McLuhan's "global theater," Crary's description of the non-stop marketplace that marshals attention and demands unceasing productivity is a manifestation of Minsky's vision of a "remote control economy." In *Open Sky* (a book I first encountered on Jonas's shelf), Paul Virilio addresses the way that technologies of telepresence produce a "teletopia" that exists somewhere between the utopias and dystopias anticipated by the likes of Minsky, McLuhan, and writers of science fiction. "Immediate teleaction, instantaneous telepresence," Virilio writes:

> Thanks to the new practices of television broadcasting or remote transmission, *acting*, the famous teleacting of remote control, is here facilitated by the maximum performance of electromagnetism and by the radioelectric views of what is now called **optoelectronics**, the perceptual faculties of the individual's body being transferred one by one to machines–but also, most recently, to captors, sensors and other microprocessor detectors, capable of making up for the lack of tactility at a distance, *widespread remote control* preparing to take up where *permanent telesurveillance* left off.[134]

If Virilio's attention to the transformations of "*permanent telesurveillance*" echoes McLuhan's "proscenium arch of satellites," the former's invocation of "*acting*" within such a such a state of constant feedback and monitoring that has taken over from traditional modes of surveillance (such as George Orwell's notion of Big Brother in *1984*) is directly related to Minsky's telepresence: the "famous teleacting of remote control." Acting, for Virilio, is presence at a distance. Yet in contrast to Fischer-Lichte and Weber, who describe the generatively dislocative effects of the way that the actor

[134] Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose (London and New York: Verso, 1997) 10. Emphasis in original.

always straddles a divided presence, Virilio sees this dislocation as having been subsumed into the "teleaction" that only contributes to the smooth functioning of a remote controlled existence. Through the optics of science fiction and theater, I have suggested, Minsky's idea of telepresence contains a notion of acting—of investing and extending one's presence in and through an apparatus alien to it—that is fundamentally disturbing to the outer limits of the self. Virilio is less optimistic: for him, the model of acting put forth by telepresence ("individual's body being transferred one by one to machines") has entailed a total colonization of inside/outside through "captors, sensors and other microprocessor detectors" that continually feed back into structures of control and performance at a distance.

Virilio writes that when a "concept of physical 'distance'" is eclipsed by "the concept of an instantaneous microphysical transmitting and receiving power," "the former primacy of the perspectivist conception of Galileo's era" is likewise collapsed.[135] Like the denial of "outer space" by the occupants of Heinlein's ship, this eradication of perspective—the ideological and technological negation of the distance and difference between here and there—is a condition of the telepresent. Galileo, who famously used the newly invented telescope to prove that the earth is not the center of the universe, has a subtle cameo in the nightmarish total presence of *Double Lunar Dogs*. The credits for the 1984 video version of the piece reference a "Bertolt Brecht quotation from 'Galileo.'" *Galileo*, or *The Life of Galileo*, is a 1938 play by Brecht based on the astronomer's life from his first use of the telescope to his conviction and imprisonment by the Catholic authorities. The quotation in *Double Lunar Dogs* is not in fact a line from the play, but

[135] Virilio, *Open Sky*, 45.

adapted from a quote attributed to Galileo himself.[136] "I have enlarged the universe a hundred thousand times," Gray says off screen following Warrilow's monologue toward the end of the video; "I've shrunk now into the size of my own body." Galileo's quote evokes the extension of the body through teletechnological means and then its restoration to its original proportions (presumably when he was outlawed from viewing the stars). Though this quote is not included in Brecht's *Galileo*, *Double Lunar Dogs* does reference the final scene of his play, which was also dramatized in Joseph Losey's 1975 film *The Life of Galileo*. In the play's last scene, Galileo, who is living under house arrest, is visited by his former pupil. When they are left alone, Galileo tells his student that he has secretly copied down his scientific discoveries in a manuscript, which he has hidden inside a model globe. He tells the student to retrieve the manuscript from the globe and take it with him to publish and circulate abroad. Jonas references Brecht's script in *Double Lunar Dogs*. Gray, who plays the mad scientist, asks Jonas if she remembers a series of objects: a trumpet, a mask, a hammer, an apple, and a copy of the book *The Wizard of Oz*. The answer is always "no." Then Gray shows Jonas a globe (fig. 4.20). She asks, "How much did it cost?" He replies, "What kind of question is that?" She counters: "What's inside of it?" "I don't know, let's find out," he answers.

In Brecht's telling, inside of the globe is Galileo's manuscript: a document emblematic of the perspective gained through respect for distance and the relationships that constellate across it. When the earth was dislodged from the center of the universe, a new perspective was gained: our existence is always relative, dependent on long-distance relationships; our presence, contingent. As technologies of telepresence threaten to flatten

[136] Given Jonas's active dialogue and collaboration with The Wooster Group, it is possible that she read Brecht's play and perhaps integrated excerpts into an earlier version of the video.

earthly experience into a uniformly mediated present, the astronomer's respect for distance regains urgency. Seemingly overcome through a technologized presence, distance reappears on a subjective scale in the presence of the actor, who, as she appears on stage, is always dislocated between here and there, self and other. If techniques of acting anticipated technologies of presence, this mode of being in the world also always disturbs the appearance of a homogenized shared present by testing one's outer limits and tapping one's inner aliens.

"Here there was also distance—even in the close-up."

– Joan Jonas[1]

On the stage there is a road receding dramatically into the distance. It is an enlarged picture postcard—an old black and white photograph of a wide lane bordered by trees heading straight for the horizon. Projected onto a central rectangular screen flanked on each side by two narrower screens, the road bisects the stage: establishing its vanishing point. After a while, three women pass behind the screens, one leading a young girl by the hand. The figures cross in front of a light at the back of the stage, so their shadows are cast onto the road from the other side of the screen. Their outsized feet and swinging hems disregard the image's scale of distances. The women and the girl emerge from behind the screen, now diminished in size. A teenage boy in a tall white hat settles down onto the stage before a pile of sticks; a man sits at a piano and picks up an accordion. They wait, gathered around the luminous road.

Clad in a simple white dress, Joan Jonas sits down at an illuminated worktable at stage left. On the table, a taxidermied bird perches beside a small video camera that, craned over the desk, serves as an overhead projector. Across the stage, on the opposite end of the screens, Jason Moran waits at the piano, a laptop by his side and an accordion resting on his lap. In silence, Jonas places a series of images below the video camera so they are enlarged and projected onto the central screen, akin to a slide lecture. The postcard with the road is overlaid with an antique illustration of a bull with smiling eyes

[1] Joan Jonas, "Transmission," in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 127.

and hooves like dainty shoes; a photograph of a carved feline totem; and a painting of a woman in a flowing dress balanced in the branches of a tree. This stack of pictures is then superimposed with a video of Jonas and two other women standing in a birch forest, which extends across the five screens. The figures in the video have a ghostly appearance. They wear white papier mâché masks and colorful turbans, confronting the audience with steady, enigmatic gazes.

"Rook," Jonas's recorded voice announces, breaking the silence. "High in the birch," answers a male voice. "Lapland bunting," Jonas says. "On the ground," the man replies. A rhythmic electronic pulse becomes audible. "Spotted flycatcher…On the ground." The music rises. A large shadow materializes on the central screen. "Wryneck…On the branch. Honey buzzard…On the stump. Roller…Climbing on the trunk." At her desk, Jonas is holds the stuffed bird under a light and begins to trace its silhouette with a magic marker. "Jackdraw….Male and female on a branch." As she draws, Jonas's hand appears to move through the video of the woodland, now framed by the bird's shadow. Moran plays softly on the accordion. "White stork…By a nest. Lemming…Among the moss. Nuthatch…In the top of the closest trunk."

Two young women appear onscreen, replacing the woods and the bird. They are binding a heap of branches together, their loose wavy hair falling over their shoulders as they work. The recording of this endeavor is overlaid with a second video image of a sunlit stand of trees. On stage in front of the screen, the adolescent wearing the tall hat begins his own task of bundling a pile of sticks, loudly banging them against the stage as his activity echoes that of the girls. Video of the forest captured through a fish-eye lens takes over the screen. Moran plays softly on the piano, building a melody. Jonas sits

silently at her worktable, while her recorded voice resounds in the theater once more. “It was a beautiful afternoon. Just like a quire, the voices came in. The wind opened the front door. Signs of spirits. You don't see anything where there’s electricity.”

Jonas resumes the slide demonstration from her desk as Moran slowly picks out notes on his piano. “The eye of a bee,” reads a card placed under the projector. Next, an assortment of diagrams showing such an apian eye: a globe with a thousand lenses. Jonas then lays down a typewritten sheet:

> lost 50 percent of big species
>
> decline by half every 40 years frog bee or bat
>
> what is special function of each

A close-up shot of honeybees milling about a hive fills the screen. The adolescent performer with the tall hat leads two younger boys onto the stage. A girl in a green dress and lavender turban joins them. The performers cast shadows against the screen of bees at the same time that the bees are projected onto their bodies. As they begin to move in figure eights, mimicking the bee’s waggle dance, their presences are multiplied. In a prerecorded sequence, another group (the four same performers on stage, plus the two wavy-haired young women) appears onscreen doing the same dance. Like the kids present onstage, they are bathed in a video image of honeycomb (a projection within a projection). A translucent scrim lowers, adding another surface to intercept and filter the projections. Moving behind the scrim, the performers become more fully enmeshed in the strata of images—a dazzling video hive—accompanied by a polytonal thickening of Moran’s piano.

Waggling in with an electronic baseline, Jonas and another woman join the young performers on stage, blending into the video hive. They wear matching bee masks with lobed mesh eyes and hold paper screens that catch the projected honeycomb out of the air. The other bees disperse, save for Jonas. She shimmies the length of the stage and runs back and forth behind the scrim, buzzing within the layers of video projection. Jonas is released by her shadow, which replaces her presence onstage in a black and white video that plays on the central screen. The footage captures Jonas's contour moving down a wide beach with a tall walking stick. Recalling the large shadows crossing the road at the start of the performance, the angle at which Jonas's silhouette is cast suggests that she is, simultaneously, walking across the stage. But, having provisionally vanished, she is not so easily locatable.

The first ten minutes of *They Come to Us without a Word II,* which Jonas first performed in Venice, Italy in 2015, indicate the densely mediated texture of this live piece. Performers negotiate a richly layered landscape of video, pictures, music, and text (the quotations are drawn from *Cape Breton Book of the Night*, a collection of ghost stories from Nova Scotia, and an inventory of taxidermied animals displayed in the Biological Museum in Stockholm). Echoing the poetic litany of birds, each of which is spotted at a distance, Jonas herself is present in various places: at the table, in the forest, on the screen, through the speakers. She is the artist, teaching us how to look. She is a ghost in the forest; a bee in the hive; a wanderer on the beach. She is body, image, voice, shadow. Intermixed with other performers of all ages, her presence is multiple, alighting differently within each mediated passage of performance.

Along with Jonas's *Reanimation*, which I saw at Roulette in New York in 2013, *They Come to Us without a Word II* is the only performance by Jonas that I have seen in person: first, in 2015, at the Teatro Piccolo Arsenale during the Venice Biennale, and again, in 2016, at The Kitchen in New York. Jonas made this performance in conjunction with her installation at the Venice Biennale, *They Come to Us without a Word,* a sprawling work that filled the five-rooms of the U.S. Pavilion with video, objects, drawings, and sound during the Venice Biennale (May 5 – November 22, 2015). The installation and the performance mirrored one another from opposite ends of the Biennale. Jonas translated a number of elements from the installation into the live piece, which she performed over three evenings. The branches bundled by the young performers onscreen and onstage, for instance, recalled Jonas's sculpture of dead tree trunks from the nearby island of Certosa bound together with copper wire that stood in the pavilion's courtyard. Jonas also used some of the same video footage in both the installation and performance, such as her shadow on the beach and children meandering through a collection of tall white cones. Moran's original music could be heard in both the pavilion and the theater. As has been true since the turn of the 1970s, Jonas's work is never singular: impossible to fully locate in any one place, medium, or time.

Even as it took place within the seemingly fixed location of the Teatro Piccolo, *They Come to Us without a Word II* disturbed a stable sense of spatiotemporal presence. As Ann Reynolds has written, Jonas's performances may be likened to Jacopo Tintoretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* (1582-87), a canvas installed in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice. With its use of multiple vanishing points, this painting "may be experienced as a more open, fluctuating palimpsest of spaces that don't always coalesce

even as they coexist within a shared set of physical term limits."[2] For Tintoretto, these limits are the canvas and the room in which it is installed; for Jonas, they are the screen and the stage. Recalling the Renaissance revolution in set design, in which the stage was united by a perspectival system, the single vanishing point projected at the outset of Jonas's performance appeared there only to signal its own transgression. As Jonas has described, her video performances were, and continue to be, designed to stage a heterogeneous range of perspectives—in this performance, even perhaps that of a bee. "Video performance offered the possibility of multiple simultaneous points of view," Jonas has written. "Perception was relative. There was a range of choices. Time and space in these performances were like Borges's *Garden of the Forking Paths*. Here were parallel worlds. I could inhabit, simultaneously, different fields of view, different channels."[3]

Though I was physically there to see *They Come to Us without a Word II*, translating my experience of watching the piece into words only elaborated the dislocations evident in the performance itself. In reconstructing the performance, I have drawn on several sources: my (mostly illegible) notes, scrawled in the dim light of the theater; surreptitious cellphone photographs; sanctioned professional photographs; video documentation provided by Jonas's gallery; and descriptions of the performance published by other writers. The very experience of watching the performance was shot through with the desire to preserve it: scribbling in the dark, stealing blurry photos. In attempting to describe the piece, it became evident that Jonas's mediatic layering of

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[2] Ann Reynolds, "How the Box Contains Us," in *Joan Jonas: They Come to Us without a Word*, ed. Jane Farver (Cambridge, New York, and Stuttgart: MIT List Visual Arts Center, Gregory R. Miller & Co., Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2015), 20.
[3] Joan Jonas, "Transmission," 123, 125.

nearly every moment of the performance resists the linearity of language and sequential progression of narration. Though Jonas's performance defied my drive to pin it down, it did not do so because it was essentially ephemeral, always disappearing from view (the video documentation would have solved that). Rather, it evaded capture because it relentlessly multiplied temporal and spatial coordinates in the very time of its unfolding. What it resisted, in other words, was a stable sense of presence itself.

Peggy Phelan has argued that performance is defined by its quality of vanishing, fundamentally resisting economies of visibility based on reproduction and circulation. "Performance's only life is in the present," Phelan contends; performance only "becomes itself through disappearance."[4] Watching one of Jonas's live pieces, it feels more accurate to say: performance becomes itself through mediation. Rather than a flowering of presence followed by its disappearance, the experience of watching Jonas's work insists that the ostensible presence inherent to performance is already mediated. "The thing that moves us is always on the edge of a disappearance," Herbert Blau wrote about making performance. "Whether in or out of perspective, we are always at the vanishing point."[5] Instead of vanishing, performance rather seems to recede continually into the distance: never fully graspable but, at the same time, never completely gone.

Throughout this dissertation, I have looked at performance at a distance. This has been by necessity: the majority of the performances I discuss took place in the decade before I was born. I was not there to watch Joan Jonas from a rooftop; see her channel Organic Honey in her plastic mask and feathered headdress; encounter her on the street

[4] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 146.
[5] Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 28.

yelling through a large cone; climb aboard her imaginary spaceship. I could not experience these pieces in the present tense of their unfolding. Bonnie Marranca, a critic and editor who, in 1976, co-founded *Performing Arts Journal*, one of the first publications devoted to performance, once questioned me on writing about performances that I had missed by about five decades. Marranca, though encouraged by a younger generation's interest in the pioneers of performance art, wondered how this generation could effectively address this work without ever having seen it. My response to Marranca is two-fold. First, how does performance art, by appearing to recede into the past, pointedly engage rather than resist the historian, who has always had to reconstruct bygone events through whatever materials remain? Second, and more specifically: how does the work that Marranca may have seen firsthand already stage the problem of distance as the very condition of presence?

In this dissertation, where I have experienced and reconstructed each and every performance from a distance, I have also argued that a problemitization of the present tense spurred by video's technologized presence underpinned many of the earliest performance art works. In live pieces by Jonas and others, distance was seen to inhere in even that which appeared up close and personal. Looking back from the contemporary moment, where our experiences of the present are increasingly conditioned by the ability to appear to and interact with one another at a distance, the early forms of telepresence tested by Jonas and her peers feel all the more proximal, even at a historical remove.

Rebecca Schneider has challenged the idea that it is the nature of performance to disappear. As Schneider argues, the quality of vanishing that Phelan and Blau (and Marranca) ascribe to performance is not innate to live art, but to the ideology of the

archive. What appears as disappearance, in other words, is an effect of the power of the archive to make certain things disappear and others remain.[6] "If we consider performance as of disappearance," Schneider ask, "of an ephemerality read as vanishment and loss, are we limiting ourselves to an understanding of performance predetermined by our cultural habituation to the logic of the archive?"[7] Of course, performance *is* visible in the archive: in grainy videos, photographs, reviews, notes, and drawings. It is audible in oral histories, interviews, conversations, and gossip. It is perceptible in the margins of Jonas's journal, which she asks me, in her deep voice, why I would ever be interested in looking at; the pathways of her memories; the scenography of her living spaces; the spirit of her gestures. Performance endures in "traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things," as José Esteban Muñoz has put it.[8]

Beyond the ways that performance infiltrates in the archive (like any historical event), Schneider is interested in its particular ability to remain by contesting the archive's logic of linear history. "As the logic goes, performance is so radically 'in time' (with time considered linear) that it cannot reside in its material traces and therefore 'disappears.'"[9] Schneider argues that, because of its ever-ready potential of "*againness*"—evident in theatrical repetition and historical reenactment, for instance—performance does not offer pure presence but rather reveals "the warp and draw of one time in another time" that, after Jacques Derrida, always structures the present.[10] In this

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[6] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
[7] Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," in *Perform, Repeat, Record*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 139.
[8] José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8:2 (1996), 10.
[9] Schneider, "Performance Remains," 139.
[10] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 2, 6.

way, Schneider writes, performance challenges not only the metaphysical presence critiqued by Derrida, but "the prevalence of presentism, immediacy, and linear time" in cultures governed by archival logic.[11]

Rather than reenactment—or "reperformance," to use Marina Abramović's term—Jonas's performances layer multiple temporalities through multiple media. As Jonas wrote in her notes for *They Come to Us without a Word* installation and performance, for instance, she intended to:

> mix with pre-recorded footage past present future over the years
>
> recording with four or five different cameras referring to past
>
> technologies and the "ghost in the machine."[12]

The mediated layering of nearly every instant of the performance enabled this adjacency of different times without collapsing them into a sense of simultaneity. Coexistence without coalescence, to use Reynolds' words. Jonas also drew on her historical performance repertoire: clapping wooden blocks overhead, as she did in *Delay Delay*, and displaying tall paper cones like those used in *Mirage*. The technique of holding up pieces of paper to intercept projected images also originates in her performances of the 1970s. The theme of the paranormal returns through the ghost stories, as does the question, raised in *Double Lunar Dogs*, of the distance between humans and animals. As Joan Simon has observed, the "they" in *The Come to Us without a Word* refers both to animals and to otherworldly presences.[13] Rather than disappearing, the dead invoked in Jonas's performance materialize as apparitions in the ambiguous electronic image spaces.

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[11] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 6.
[12] Joan Jonas, "Notes on Process," in *Joan Jonas: They Come to Us without a Word*, 17.
[13] Joan Simon, "They Come to Us without a Word," in *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas* (New York: Gregory R. Miller, Co., 2015), 518.

As Schneider writes, "the bygone is not entirely gone by and the dead not completely disappeared," while "the living are not entirely (or not only) live."[14]

In her performances of the 1970s, Jonas engaged with "the bygone" not so much through the layering achieved by electronic media but through the outmoded forms of these technologies: conjuring so-called "dead media." The confluence of performance and video in the formative first decade of Jonas's career, I have argued, is undergirded by a much longer history: a media archaeology of telepresence. As Jonas explored a newly technologized presence that disturbed traditional divisions between here and there, proximal and distant, present and absent, her investigations uncovered deeper entwinements of teletechnological media and performance: human signalers, trance mediums, megaphone (wo)men, telepresent thespians. Rather than dead media, in *They Come to Us without a Word II* there is a different concern with things that have become extinct within a contemporary existence increasingly ingrained with technology. If Jonas engages with the disappearance that some argue is integral to performance, it is to address other vanishings: animal species ("frog bee or bat"), and old ways of life. "You don't see anything where there's electricity," she states in the performance, channeling an old ghost story.

In the final minutes of the performance, Jonas and the young performer with the tall white hat take the stage. They stand between the scrim and the screen, so that they appear to be inside the projection of a forest. The recorded voices return, locating various avian species. "Common kestrel…In the top of an old tree. Great gray owl…In the tree in the back." Jonas and the boy look about for the birds: nightjar, starling, sparrow hawk, ivory gull, willow tit, marsh tit. The footage switches to two houses in the woods (Jonas's

[14] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 15.

home and studio on Cape Breton Island), which the two performers appear to pass through, like spirits. “And I can see ‘im there yet,” Jonas’s voice announces in the theater as she stands silently on stage. “I can see him down under the water.” “Was he the same man you saw in the doorway?” “I wouldn’t say yes, and I wouldn’t say no.” The ghost tale echoes the nature of Jonas’s stage, where one cannot be sure of what one sees.

At the very end of the performance, the sound of hooves, then an announcer: “*Heeeeere they come!*” The screen is given over to video of a harness race in Nova Scotia. The horses trot by the camera, pulling jockeys in small carts behind them around the brightly lit track. Jonas once took me to one of these races in Inverness, where she lives for part of the year on Cape Breton Island. As she explained, it was one of the few remaining pastimes customary to the island, which, she lamented, was slowly being taken over by golf courses. Jonas had been coming to the harness races since the early 1970s, when she first started making the pilgrimage each summer from Manhattan to Nova Scotia. I pictured her perched on the bleachers with her dog, betting on the horses with the locals. In the video, the camera angle switches back and forth, so that the horses pull the carts across the screen to the right, then to the left. The racers pass through the frame, vanishing and coming around again. Where there had once been a road leading to a vanishing point, there is now a circle: a coming-around-again skirting the edge of disappearance.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.1. Joan Jonas, *Delay Delay*, 1972. Performance in New York, New York.

Figure 1.2. Joan Jonas, *Delay Delay*, 1972. Photo by Carol Mersereau.

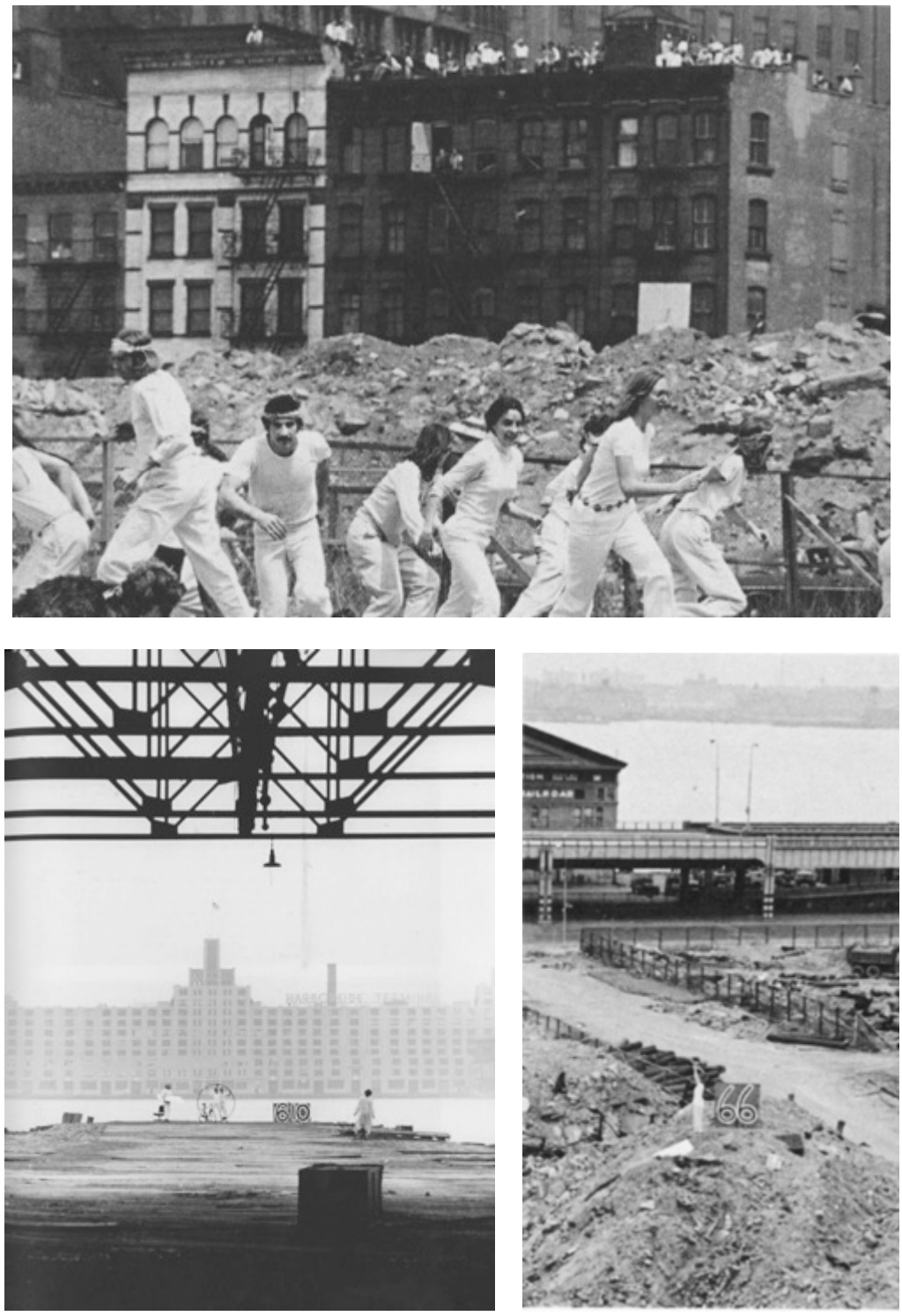


Figure 1.3. Joan Jonas, *Delay Delay*, 1972. Photos by Gianfranco Gorgoni.

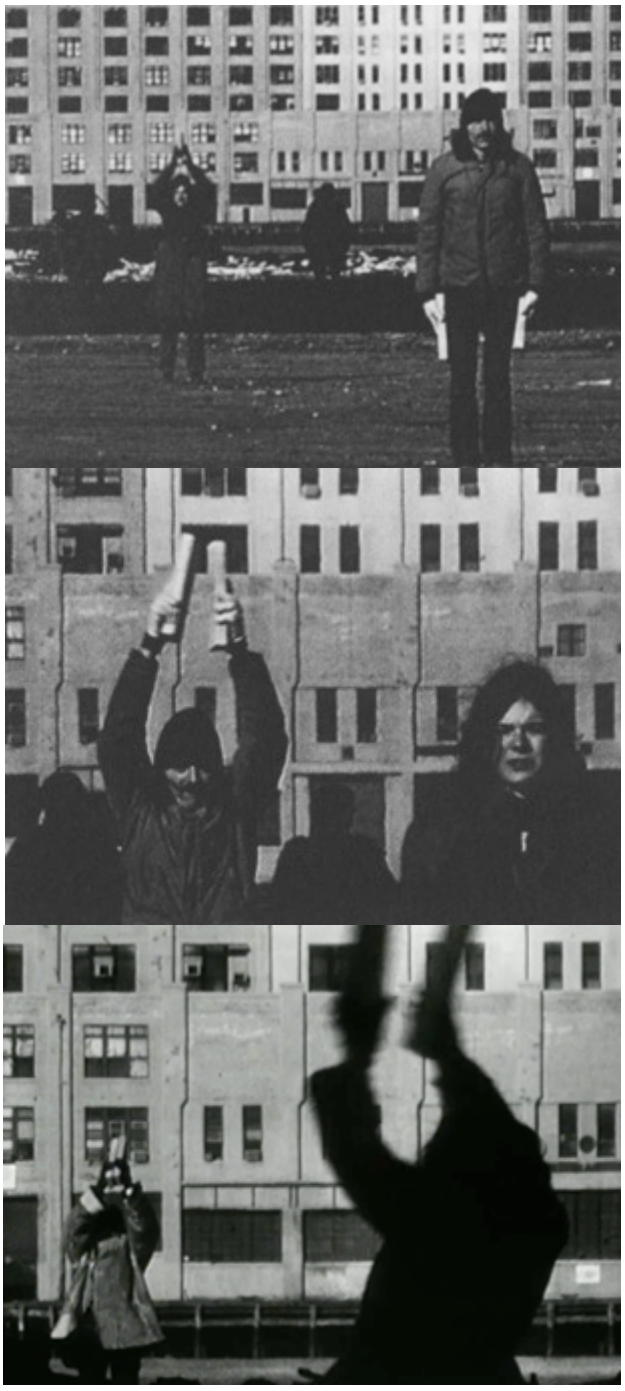


Figure 1.4. Stills from Joan Jonas, *Songdelay*, 1973. 16mm film (black and white, sound). 18:35 min.

Figure 1.5. Stills from *Songdelay*.

Figure 1.6. Stills from *Songdelay*.

Figure 1.7. Joan Jonas, *Jones Beach Piece*, 1970. Performance at Jones Beach, Queens. Photo by Richard Landry.

Figure 1.8. Joan Jonas, *Nova Scotia Beach Dance*, 1971. Performance on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Photo by Roberta Neiman.

Figure 1.9. Joan Jonas, *Delay Delay* (Rome Version), 1972. Performance in Rome, Italy. Photo by Babette Mangolte.

Figure 1.10. Richard Serra and Joan Jonas in *Delay Delay* (Rome Version), 1972. Photo by Babette Mangolte.

Figure 1.11. . Richard Serra, *Shift*, 1970-1972.

Figure 1.12. View from Joan Jonas's house on Cape Breton Island. Author photo.

Figure 1.13. Trisha Brown, *Roof Piece*, 1973. Photo by Babette Mangolte published in *TDR/The Drama Review*.

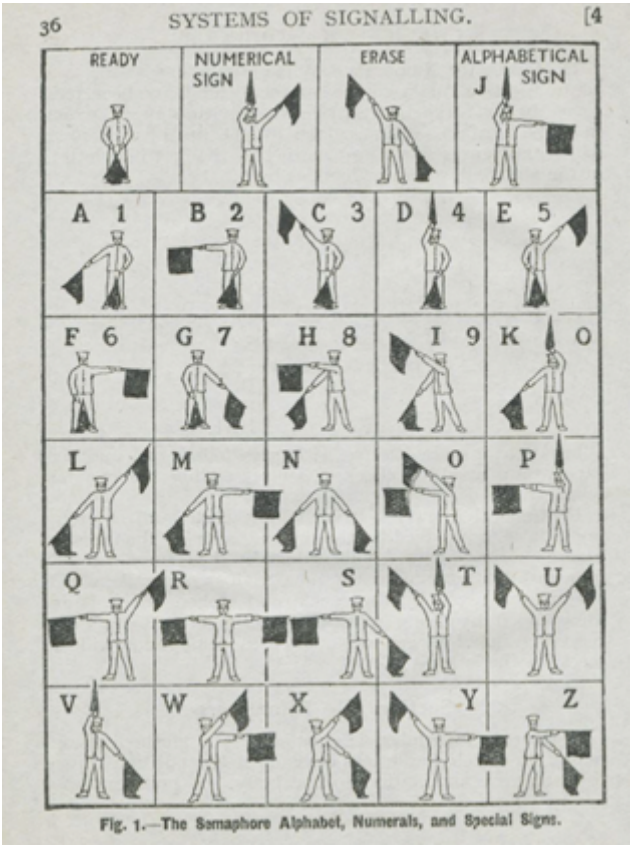


Figure 1.14. The semaphore alphabet.

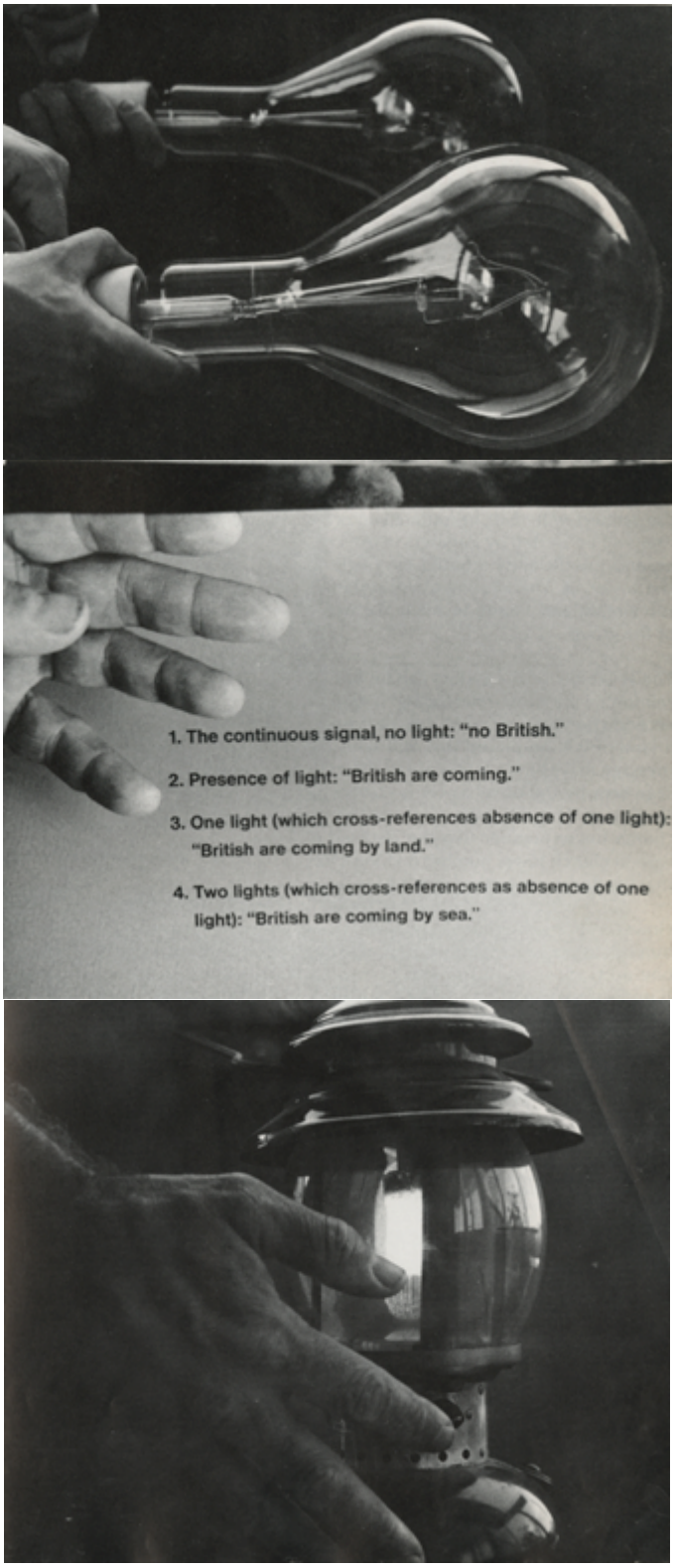


Figure 1.15. Stills from Joan Jonas and Richard Serra, *Paul Revere*, 1971. 16mm film (black and white, sound), 9 min.

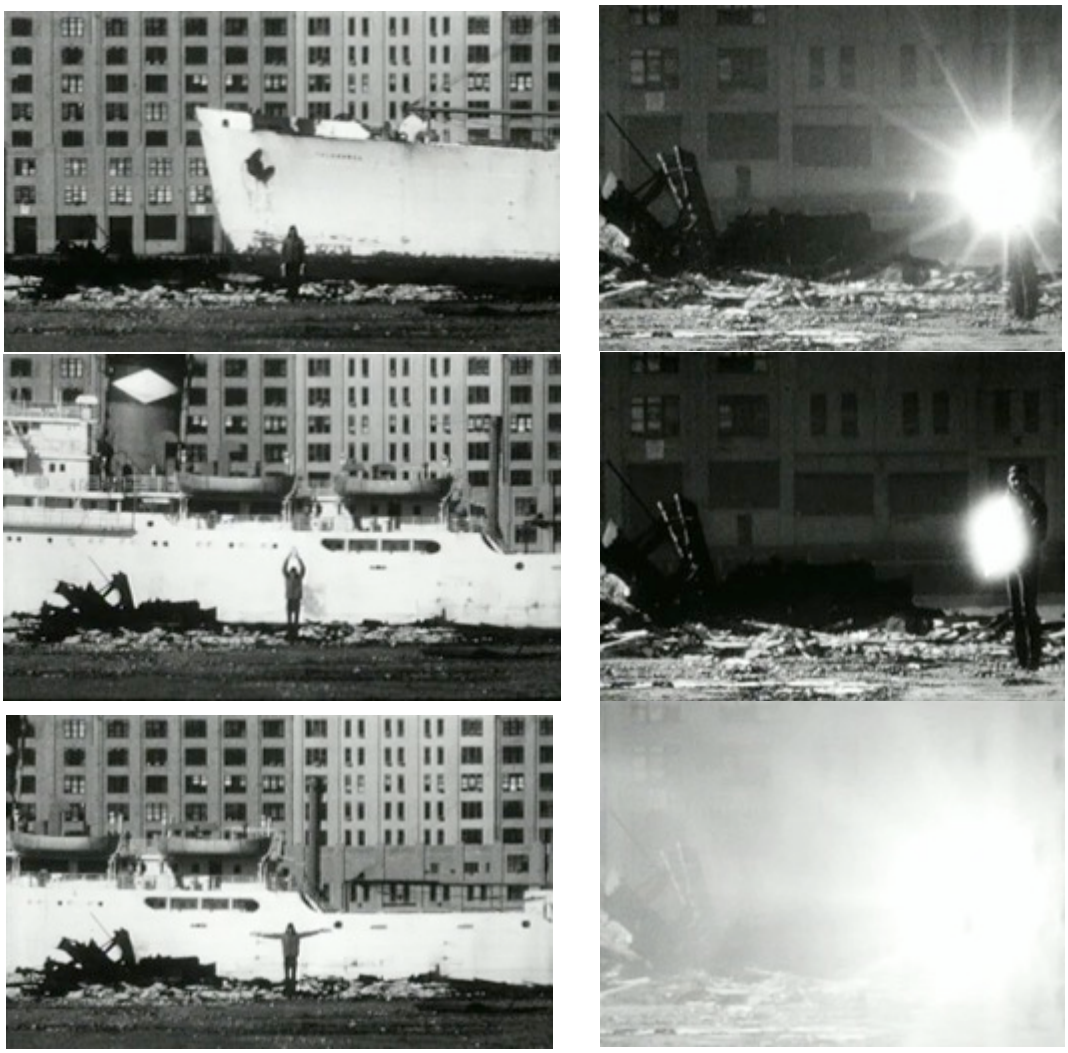


Figure 1.16. Stills from *Songdelay*.

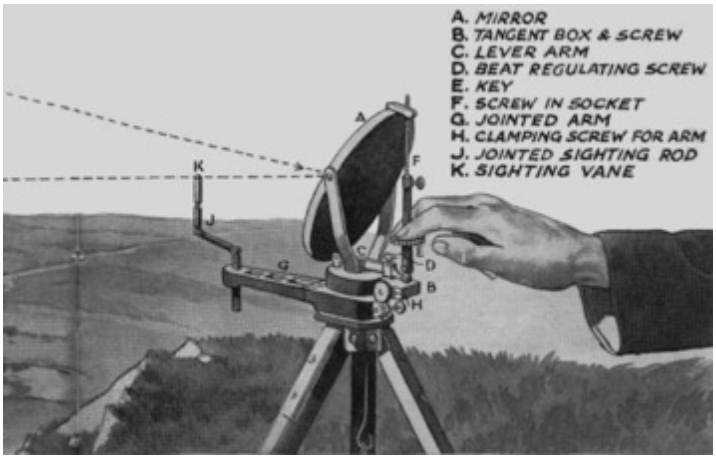


Figure 1.17. Illustration of a heliograph, c. 1870.

Figure 1.18. Stills from *Songdelay*.

Figure 1.19. The heliotrope, c. early 1900s.

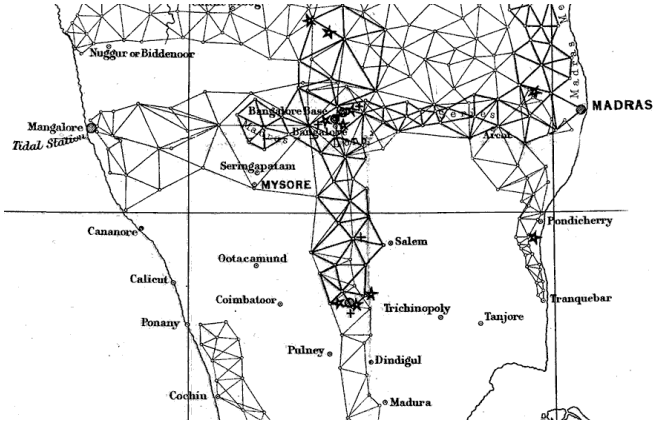


Figure 1.20. Survey map from the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, c. 1850-1870.

Figure 1.21. Stills from video of land surveyors "laying-out *Shift*" reproduced in Rosalind Krauss's 1983 essay "Richard Serra: A Translation."

Figure 2.1. Stills from Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Video (black and white, sound). 17:27 min.

Figure 2.2. Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Performance at Galleria l'Attico. Photo by Babette Mangolte.

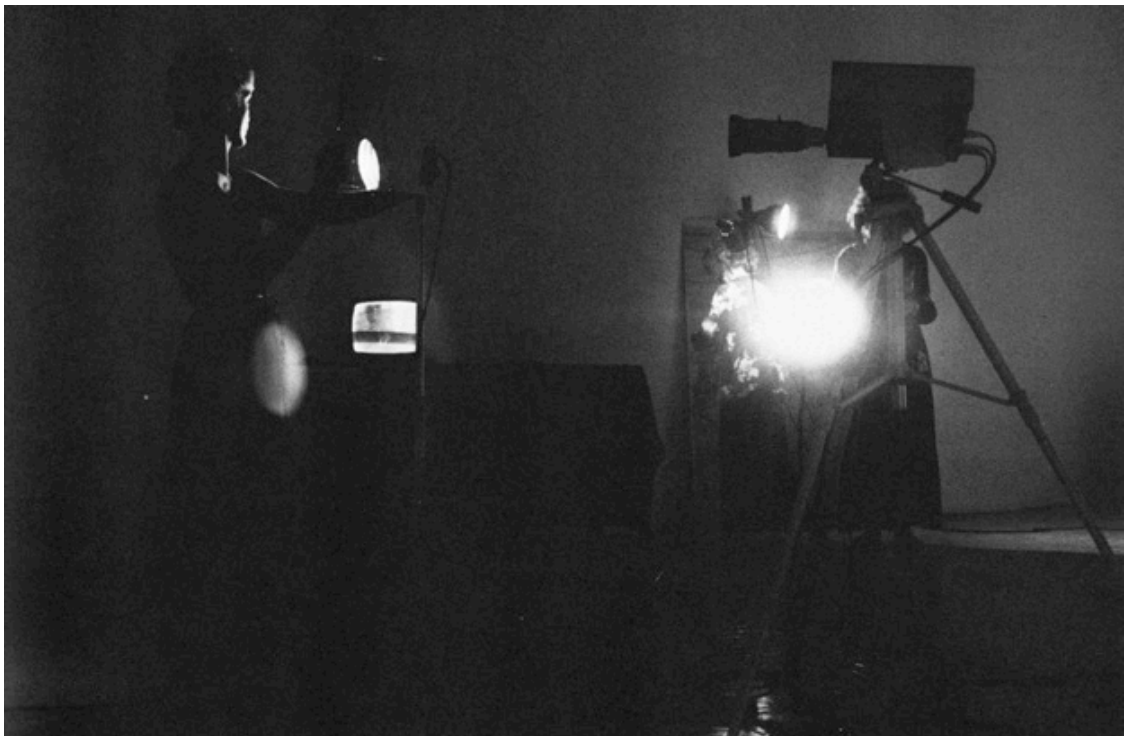


Figure 2.3. Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Performance at Galleria l'Attico. Photo by Babette Mangolte.

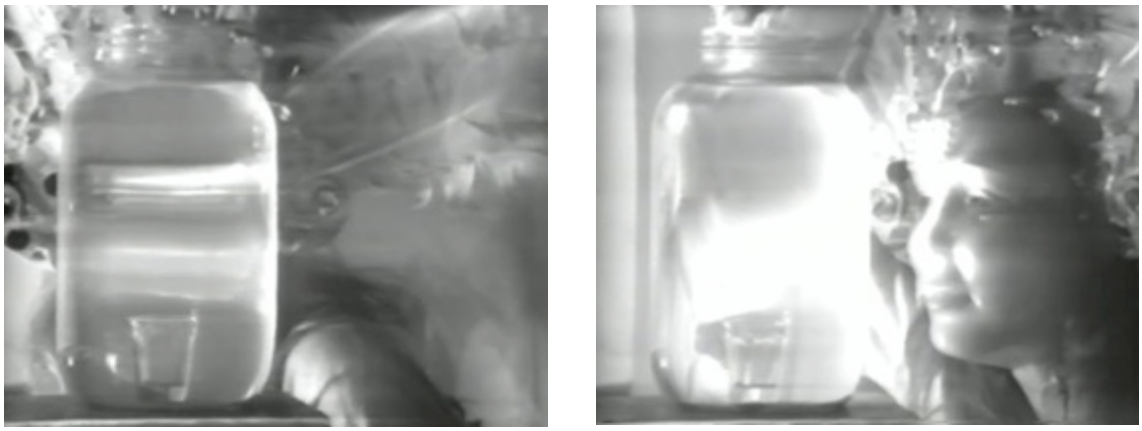
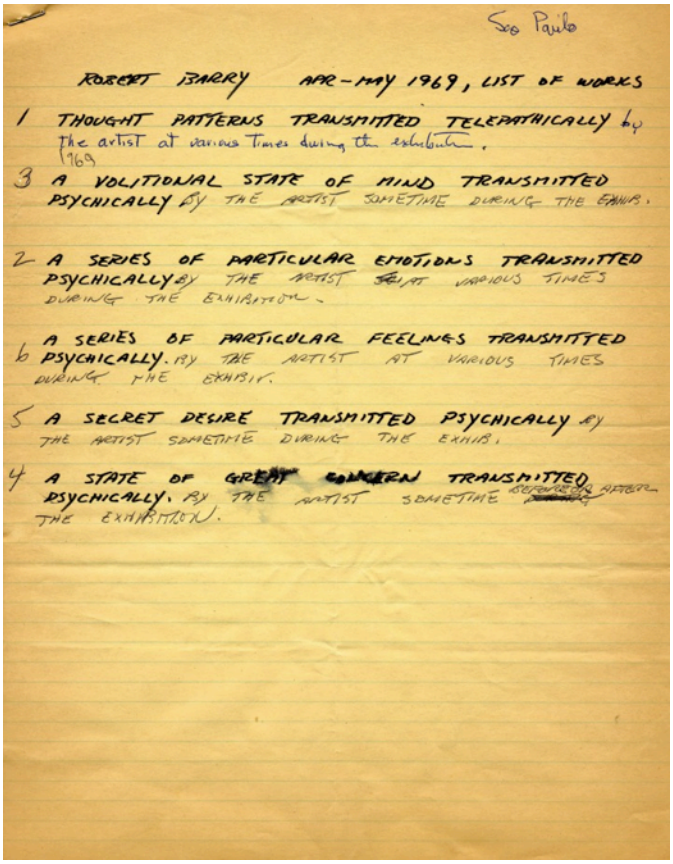


Figure 2.4. Stills from *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*.

Figure 2.5. Photograph by Richard Serra for a poster of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972.

Figure 2.6. Suzanne Harris, Kate Parker, and Linda Patton in *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Performance at LoGiudice Gallery, New York. Photo by Peter Moore.



São Paulo

ROBERT BARRY APR–MAY 1969, LIST OF WORKS

1 THOUGHT PATTERNS TRANSMITTED TELEPATHICALLY by the artist at various times during the exhibition. 1969

3 A VOLITIONAL STATE OF MIND TRANSMITTED PSYCHICALLY BY THE ARTIST SOMETIME DURING THE EXHIB.

2 A SERIES OF PARTICULAR EMOTIONS TRANSMITTED PSYCHICALLY BY THE ARTIST AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE EXHIBITION.

6 A SERIES OF PARTICULAR FEELINGS TRANSMITTED PSYCHICALLY. BY THE ARTIST AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE EXHIBIT.

5 A SECRET DESIRE TRANSMITTED PSYCHICALLY BY THE ARTIST SOMETIME DURING THE EXHIB.

4 A STATE OF GREAT CONCERN TRANSMITTED PSYCHICALLY. BY THE ARTIST SOMETIME BEFORE/DURING/AFTER THE EXHIBITION.

Figure 2.7. Robert Barry, notes for *Telepathic Piece*, 1969.

Figure 2.8. Vito Acconci, *Connecting Medium*, 1971. Video (black and white, sound). 30 min.

Figure 2.9. Giulietta Masina in Federico Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*, 1957.

Figure 2.10. Stills from *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*.

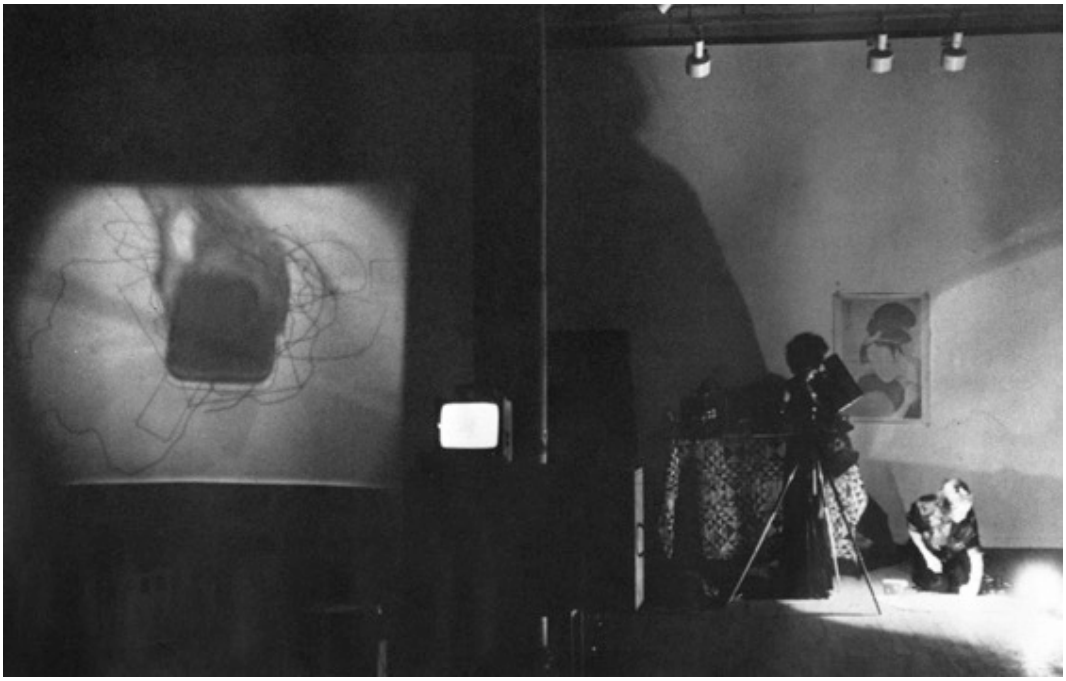


Figure 2.11. *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Performance at LoGiudice Gallery, New York. Photo by Peter Moore.

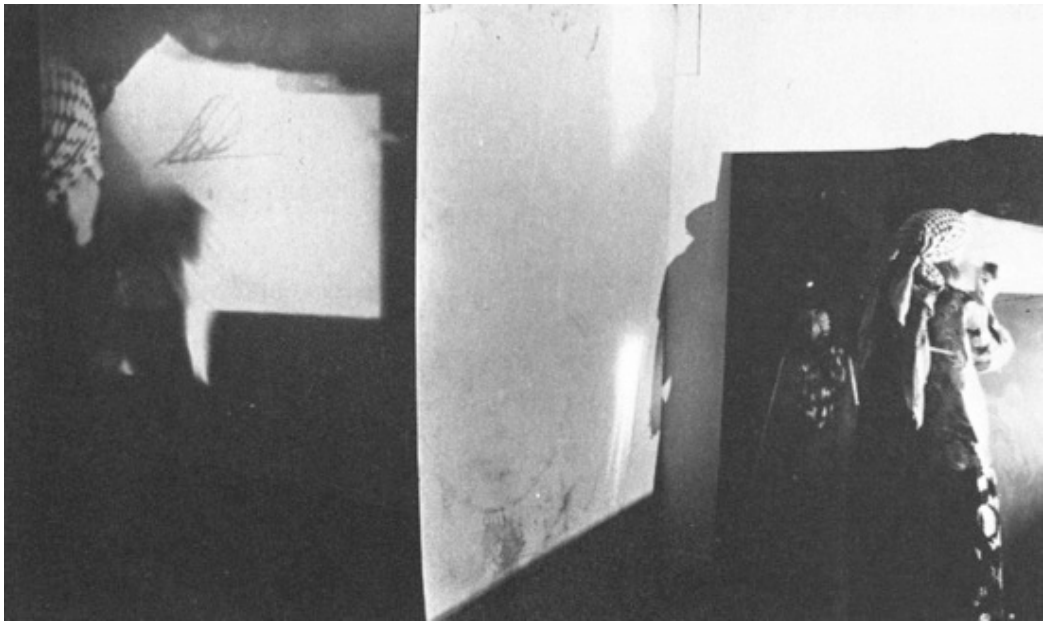


Figure 2.12. *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. Performance at LoGiudice Gallery, New York. Photo by Gianfranco Gorgoni.

Figure 2.13. Jonas performing an "Endless Drawing" in *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll*, 1972. Performance at Musée Galliera, Paris

Figure 2.14. Carolee Schneemann, *Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1973-1976. Performance at Anthology Film Archives, 1974. Photo by Gwen Thomas.

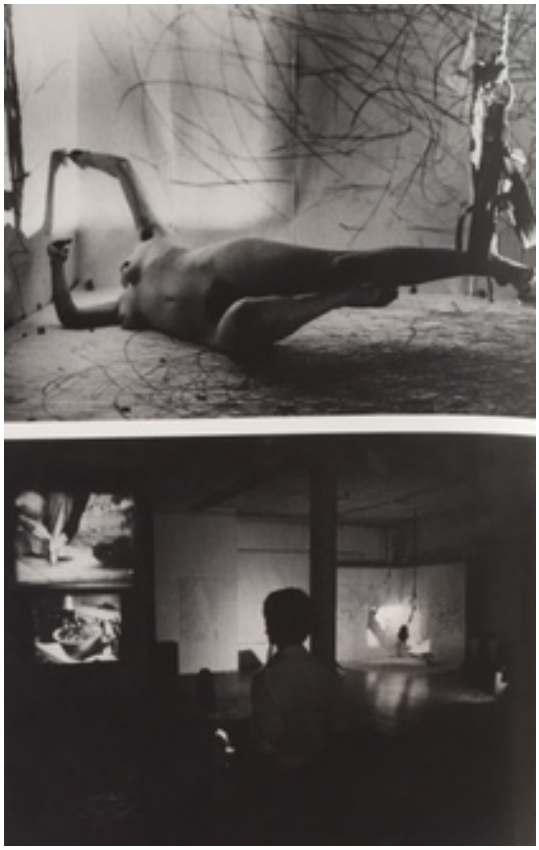


Figure 2.15. Carolee Schneemann, *Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1973-1976. Performance at The Kitchen, 1976. Photos by Shelley Farkas Davis and Anthony McCall.

Figure 2.16. Jack Smith as Rose Courtyard in Smith's *Song for Rent*, 1969. Stills from 16mm film (color, sound). 10 min.

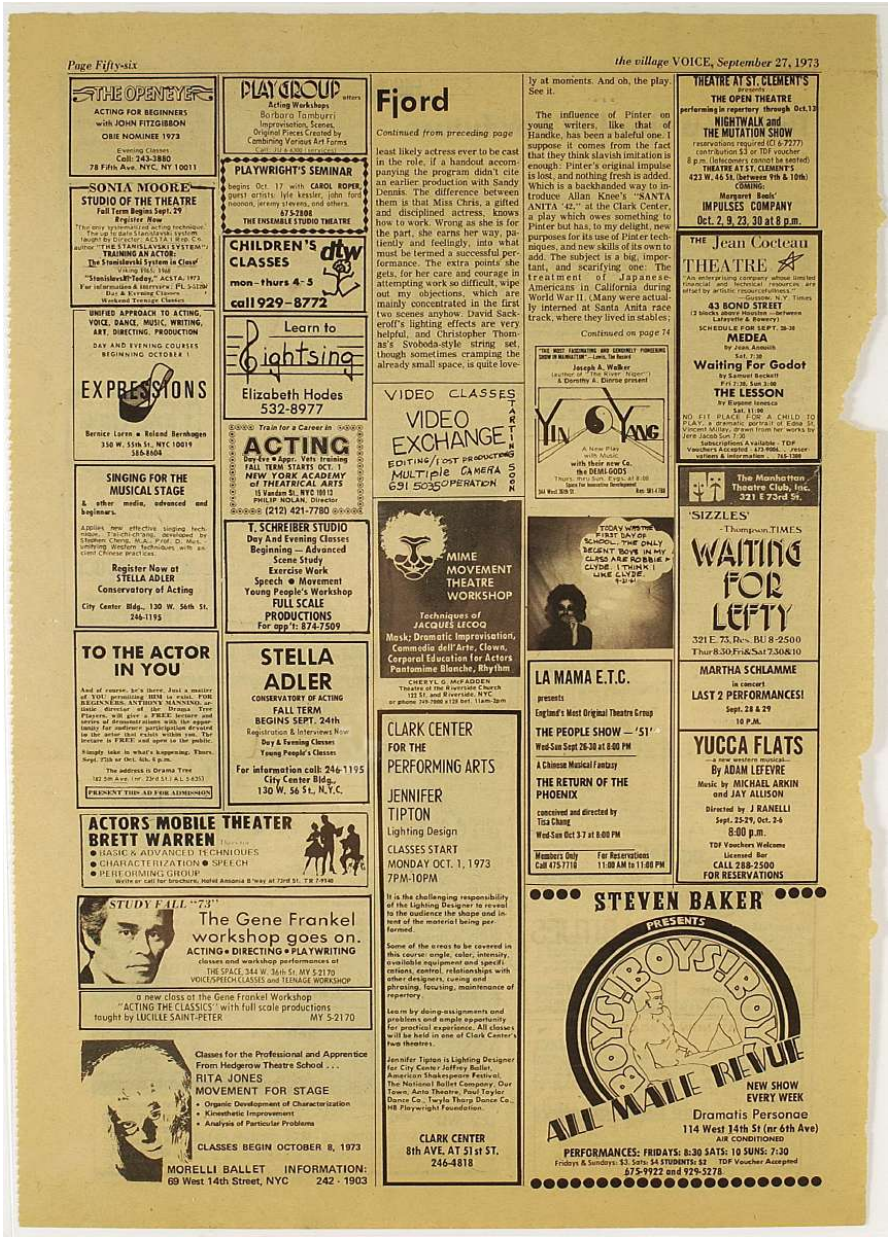


Figure 2.17. Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being, Cycle I: 9/21/61*, 1973. Advertisement in the Village Voice (September 27, 1973).

Figure 2.18. Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being: Doing Yoga*, 1975. Six silver gelatin prints. Photos by James Gutmann.

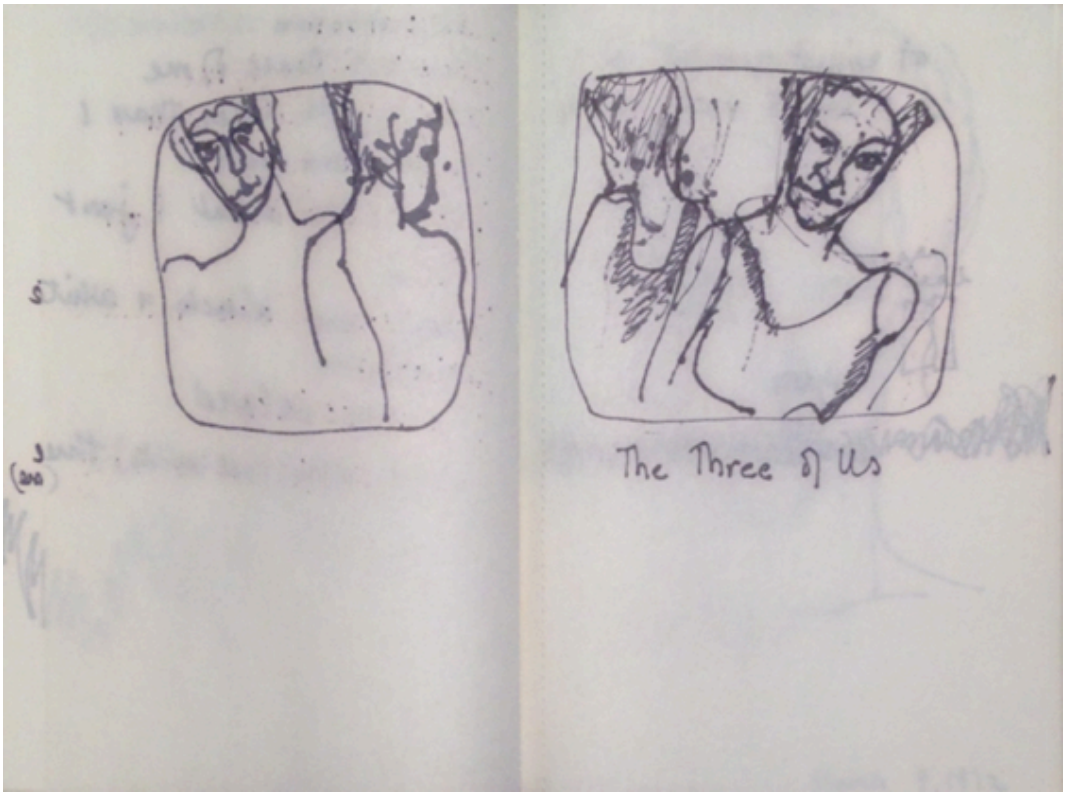


Figure 2.19. Notebook page c.1972, Joan Jonas Archive.

Figure 2.20. Stills from *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*.

Figure 2.21. Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (You Are Not Yourself)*, 1982.
Photograph and type on paper.

Figure 3.1. Stills from Joan Jonas, *Three Returns*, 1973. Video (black and white, sound). 13:14 min.

Figure 3.2. Jonas performing *Funnel* (1974) at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1974.

Figure 3.3. A collection of nineteenth century spirit trumpets used in séances.

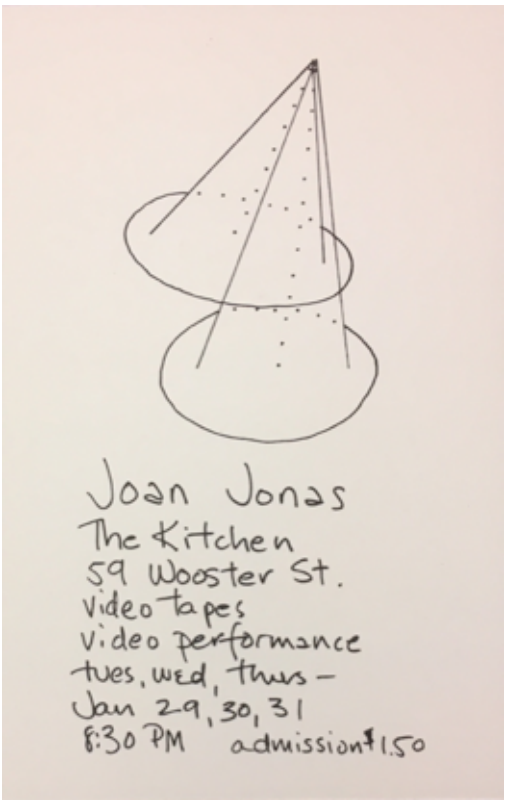


Figure 3.4. Flyer for Joan Jonas's untitled "video performance" later called *Funnel*, first performed at The Kitchen in 1974. The Kitchen Archives, Getty Research Institute. 2014.M.6, Box 39, Folder 3.

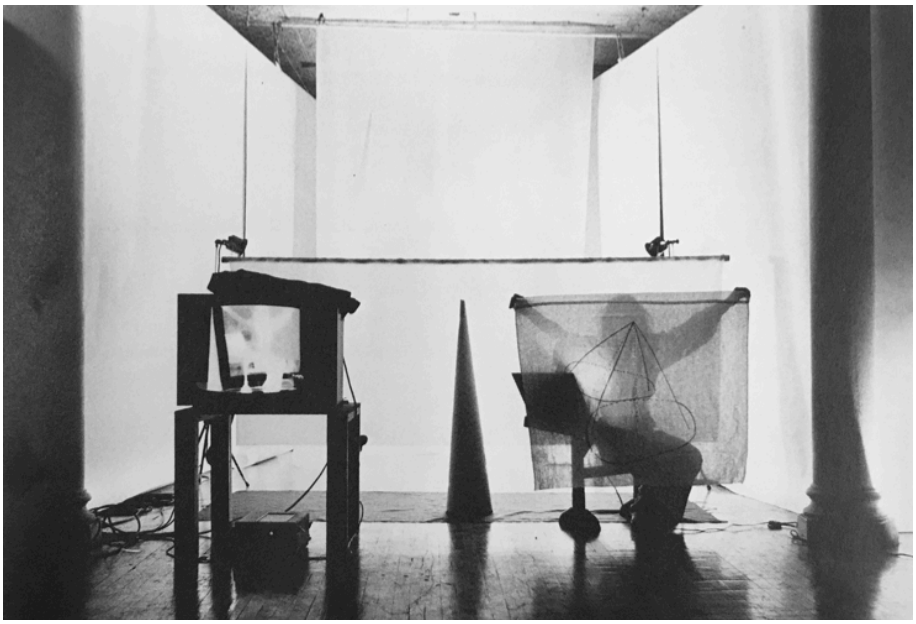


Figure 3.5. Joan Jonas, *Funnel*, 1974. Performance at The Kitchen. Photo by Babette Mangolte.

Figure 3.6. Stills from Joan Jonas, *Merlo*, 1974.
Video (black and white, sound), 16:13 min.

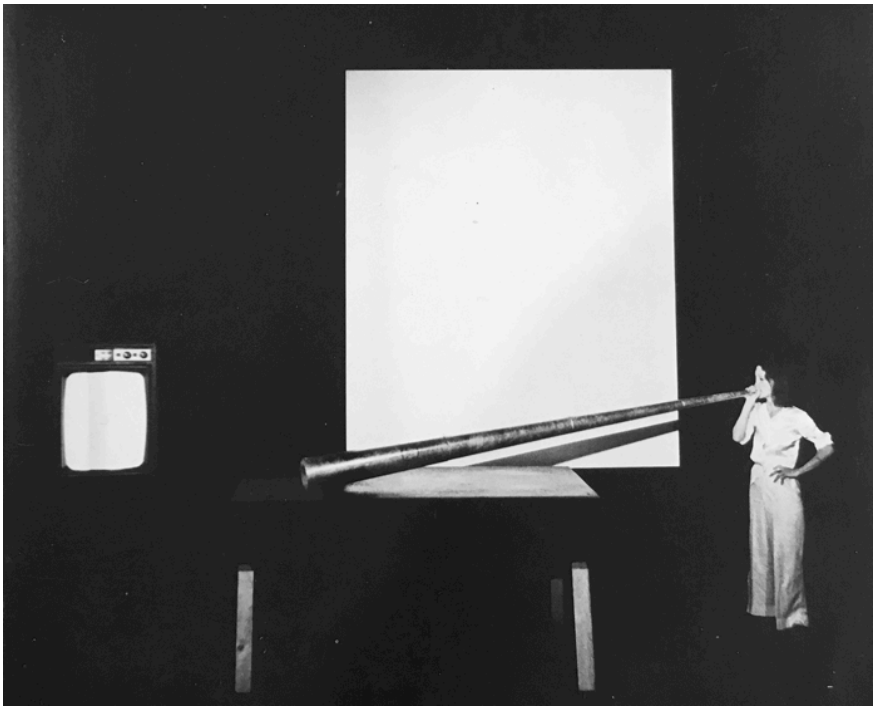
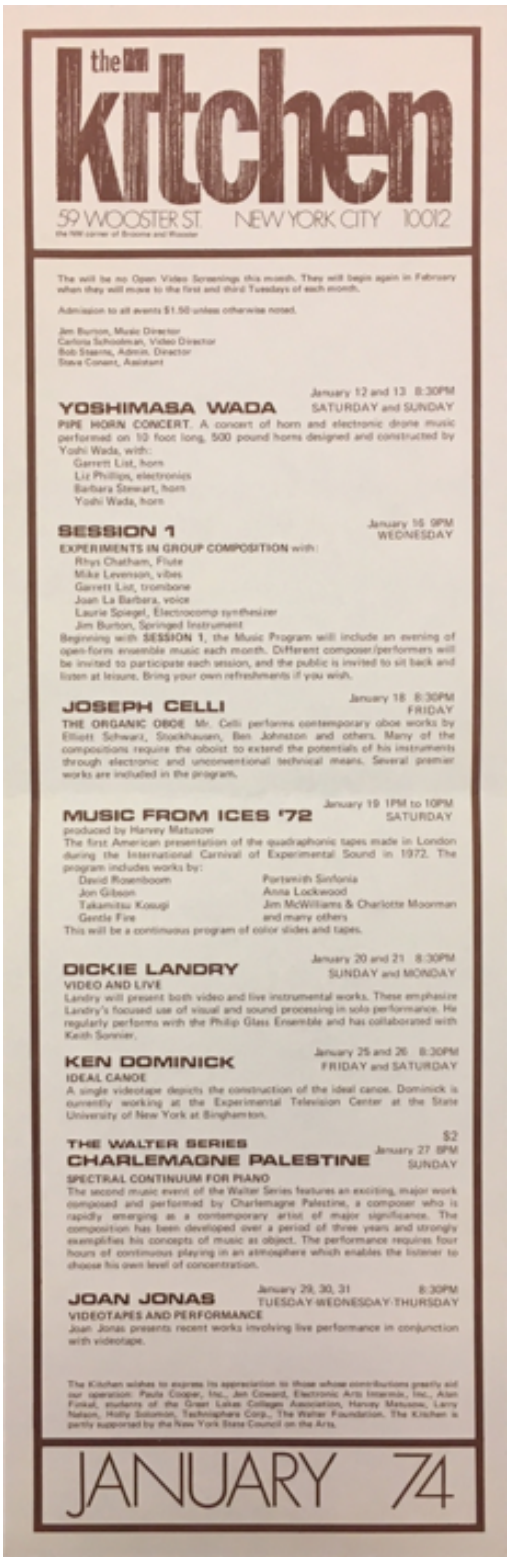


Figure 3.7. Joan Jonas, *Mirage*, 1976. Performance at Anthology Film Archives. Photo by Babette Mangolte.



the kitchen

59 WOOSTER ST. (the NW corner of Broome and Wooster) NEW YORK CITY 10012

The will be no Open Video Screenings this month. They will begin again in February when they will move to the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

Admission to all events $1.50 unless otherwise noted.

Jim Burton, Music Director
Carlotta Schoolman, Video Director
Bob Stearns, Admin. Director
Steve Conant, Assistant

YOSHIMASA WADA — January 12 and 13 8:30PM SATURDAY and SUNDAY

PIPE HORN CONCERT. A concert of horn and electronic drone music performed on 10 foot long, 500 pound horns designed and constructed by Yoshi Wada, with:
Garrett List, horn
Liz Phillips, electronics
Barbara Stewart, horn
Yoshi Wada, horn

SESSION 1 — January 16 9PM WEDNESDAY

EXPERIMENTS IN GROUP COMPOSITION with:
Rhys Chatham, Flute
Mike Levenson, vibes
Garrett List, trombone
Joan La Barbara, voice
Laurie Spiegel, Electrocomp synthesizer
Jim Burton, Springed Instrument
Beginning with **SESSION 1**, the Music Program will include an evening of open-form ensemble music each month. Different composer/performers will be invited to participate each session, and the public is invited to sit back and listen at leisure. Bring your own refreshments if you wish.

JOSEPH CELLI — January 18 8:30PM FRIDAY

THE ORGANIC OBOE Mr. Celli performs contemporary oboe works by Elliott Schwarz, Stockhausen, Ben Johnston and others. Many of the compositions require the oboist to extend the potentials of his instruments through electronic and unconventional technical means. Several premier works are included in the program.

MUSIC FROM ICES '72 — January 19 1PM to 10PM SATURDAY

produced by Harvey Matusow
The first American presentation of the quadraphonic tapes made in London during the International Carnival of Experimental Sound in 1972. The program includes works by:
David Rosenboom — Portsmith Sinfonia
Jon Gibson — Anna Lockwood
Takamitsu Kosugi — Jim McWilliams & Charlotte Moorman
Gentle Fire — and many others
This will be a continuous program of color slides and tapes.

DICKIE LANDRY — January 20 and 21 8:30PM SUNDAY and MONDAY

VIDEO AND LIVE
Landry will present both video and live instrumental works. These emphasize Landry's focused use of visual and sound processing in solo performance. He regularly performs with the Philip Glass Ensemble and has collaborated with Keith Sonnier.

KEN DOMINICK — January 25 and 26 8:30PM FRIDAY and SATURDAY

IDEAL CANOE
A single videotape depicts the construction of the ideal canoe. Dominick is currently working at the Experimental Television Center at the State University of New York at Binghamton.

THE WALTER SERIES — $2

CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE — January 27 8PM SUNDAY

SPECTRAL CONTINUUM FOR PIANO
The second music event of the Walter Series features an exciting, major work composed and performed by Charlemagne Palestine, a composer who is rapidly emerging as a contemporary artist of major significance. The composition has been developed over a period of three years and strongly exemplifies his concepts of music as object. The performance requires four hours of continuous playing in an atmosphere which enables the listener to choose his own level of concentration.

JOAN JONAS — January 29, 30, 31 8:30PM TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY

VIDEOTAPES AND PERFORMANCE
Joan Jonas presents recent works involving live performance in conjunction with videotape.

The Kitchen wishes to express its appreciation to those whose contributions greatly aid our operation: Paula Cooper, Inc., Jon Coward, Electronic Arts Intermix, Inc., Alan Finkel, students of the Great Lakes Colleges Association, Harvey Matusow, Larry Nelson, Holly Solomon, Technisphere Corp., The Walter Foundation. The Kitchen is partly supported by the New York State Council on the Arts.

JANUARY 74

Figure 3.8. January 1974 program for The Kitchen, including Yoshi Wada's *Pipe Horn Concert* and Jonas's untitled "videotapes and performance" later called *Funnel*. The Kitchen Archives, Getty Research Institute. 2014.M.6, Box 76, Folder 10.

Figure 3.9. Yoshi Wada's "pipehorns." Photo by Seiji Kakizaki.

Figure 3.10. Adrian Piper, *Catalysis IV*, 1971. Silver gelatin print.

Figure 3.11. Rebecca Horn, *Head Extension*, 1972.

Figure 3.12. Thomas Edison's megaphone, c. 1878.

Figure 3.13. Handheld megaphone, c. late nineteenth century.

Figure 3.14. Megaphone used at auto race, early twentieth century.

Figure 3.15. Megaphones used in suffragist demonstrations c. 1910-1915.

Figure 3.16. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressing demonstrators assembled in Montgomery, Alabama, March 17, 1965.

Figure 3.17. Women's liberation rally at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, 1970.

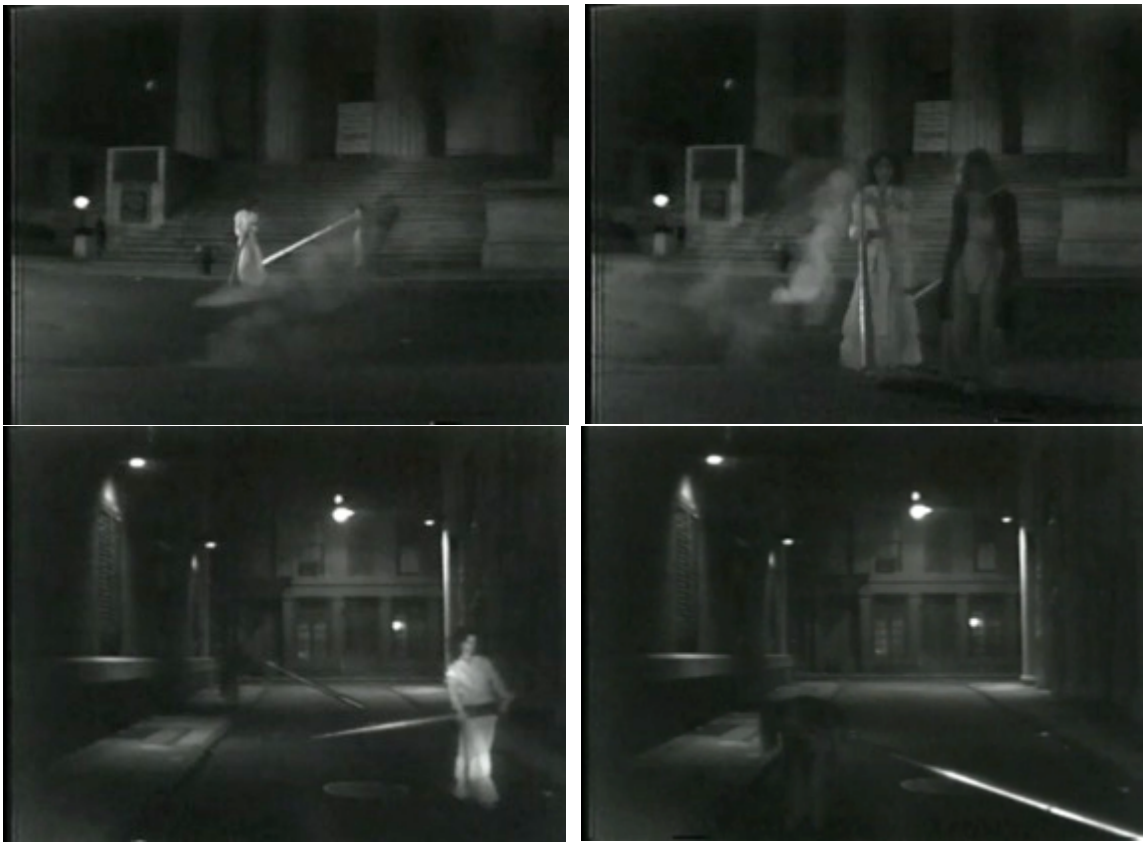


Figure 3.18. Stills from Joan Jonas, *Mirage II,* 2000. Video (black and white, sound). 30 min. Edited by Jonas with Seth Price.

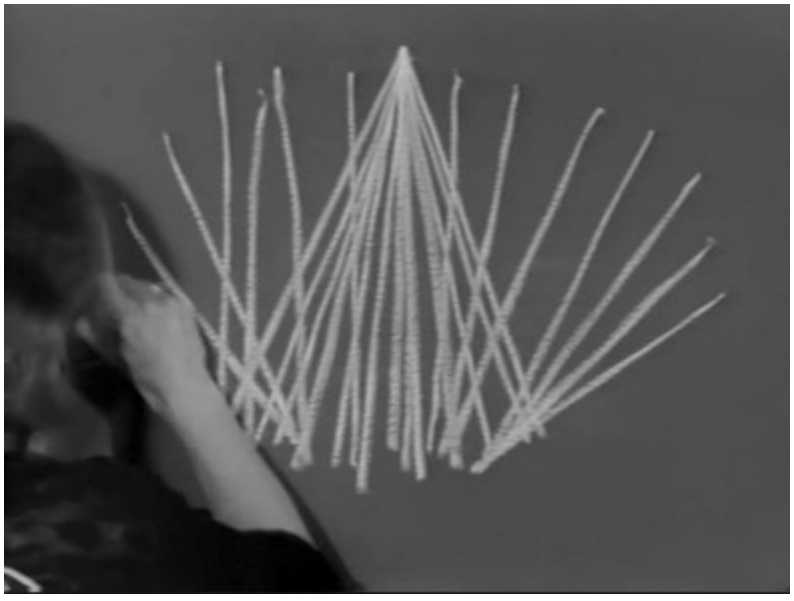


Figure 3.19. Still from *Mirage*.

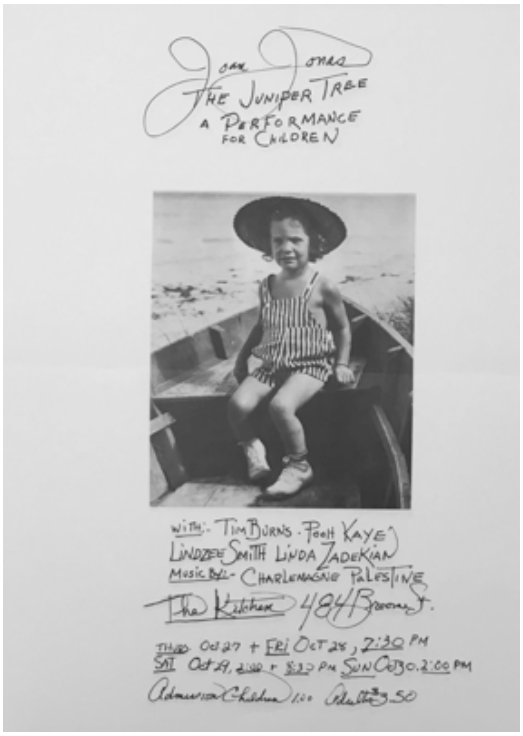


Figure 3.20. Flyer for Jonas's performance of *The Juniper Tree* at The Kitchen in 1977. The Kitchen Archives, Getty Research Institute. Box 84, Folder 7.

Figure 3.21. Joan Jonas, *The Juniper Tree*, 1976. Performance at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. Photo by Roberta Neiman.

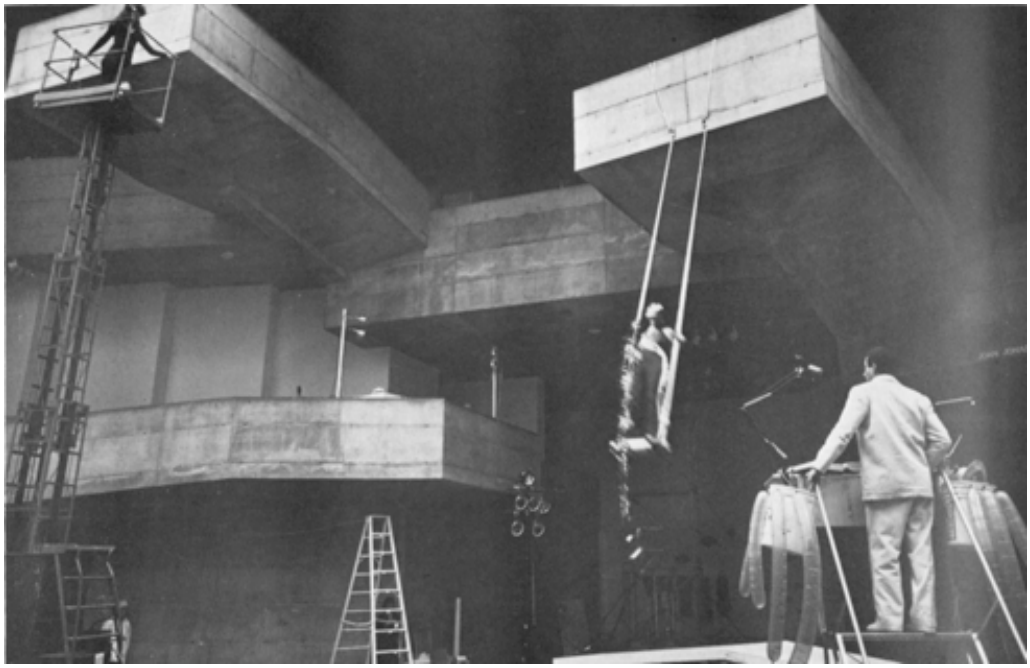
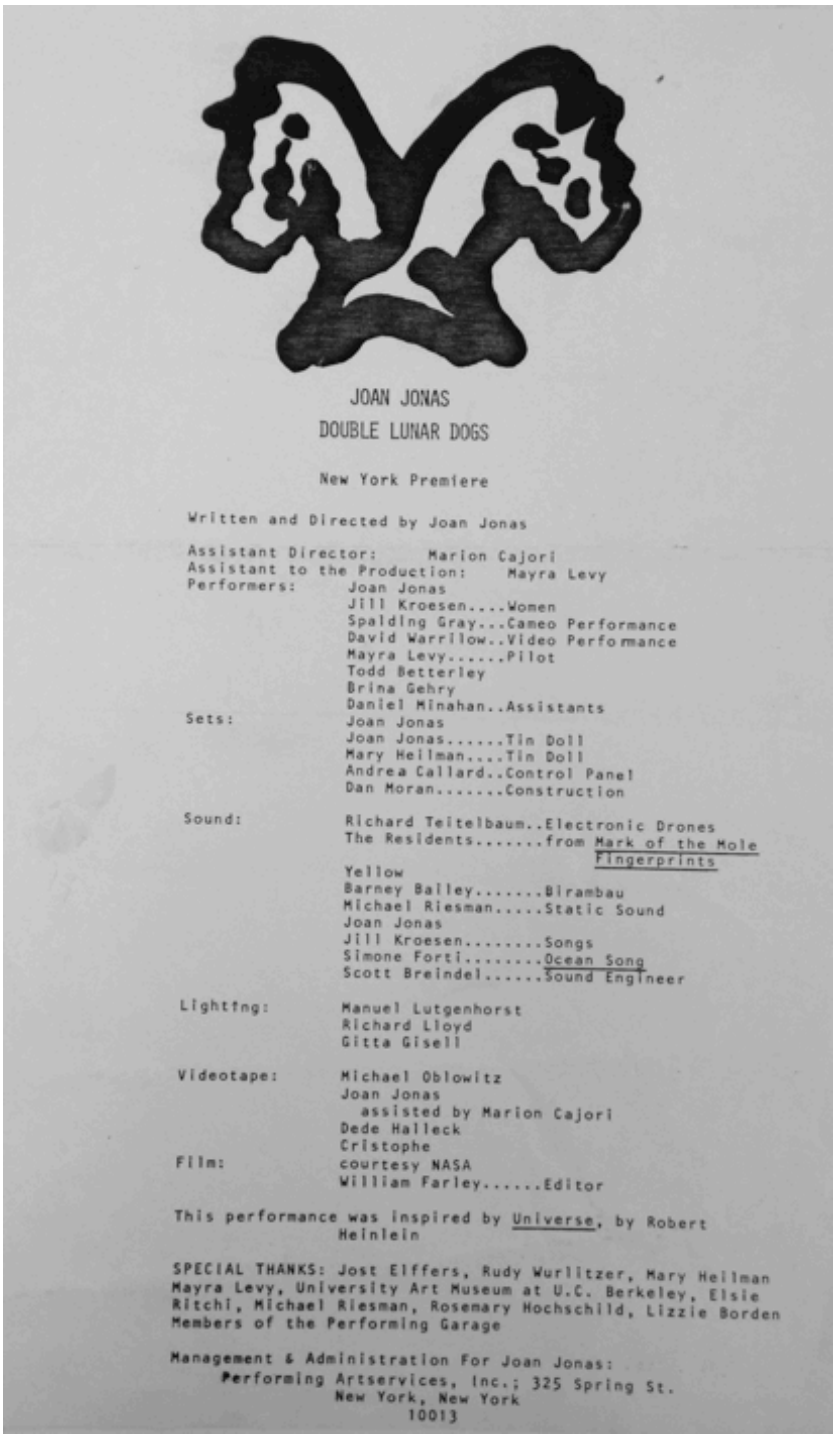


Figure 4.1. Joan Jonas, *Double Lunar Dogs*, 1980. Performance at the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley in 1980. Photo by Benjamin Blackwell.

Figure 4.2. Joan Jonas, *Double Lunar Dogs*, 1980. Performance at the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley in 1980. Photo by Benjamin Blackwell.

Figure 4.3. Photograph of a robotic hand published in Marvin Minsky's article "Telepresence," *Omni* (June 1980). Photo by Dan McCoy.

Figure 4.4. Jonas performing in *Double Lunar Dogs*, 1980. University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley. Photo by Benjamin Blackwell.



JOAN JONAS

DOUBLE LUNAR DOGS

New York Premiere

Written and Directed by Joan Jonas

Assistant Director: Marion Cajori
Assistant to the Production: Mayra Levy
Performers: Joan Jonas
Jill Kroesen....Women
Spalding Gray...Cameo Performance
David Warrilow..Video Performance
Mayra Levy.....Pilot
Todd Betterley
Brina Gehry
Daniel Minahan..Assistants
Sets: Joan Jonas
Joan Jonas.....Tin Doll
Mary Heilman....Tin Doll
Andrea Callard..Control Panel
Dan Moran.....Construction

Sound: Richard Teitelbaum..Electronic Drones
The Residents.....from Mark of the Mole
Fingerprints
Yellow
Barney Bailey.....Birambau
Michael Riesman.....Static Sound
Joan Jonas
Jill Kroesen.....Songs
Simone Forti.....Ocean Song
Scott Breindel.....Sound Engineer

Lighting: Manuel Lutgenhorst
Richard Lloyd
Gitta Gisell

Videotape: Michael Oblowitz
Joan Jonas
assisted by Marion Cajori
Dede Halleck
Cristophe

Film: courtesy NASA
William Farley.....Editor

This performance was inspired by Universe, by Robert Heinlein

SPECIAL THANKS: Jost Elffers, Rudy Wurlitzer, Mary Heilman Mayra Levy, University Art Museum at U.C. Berkeley, Elsie Ritchi, Michael Riesman, Rosemary Hochschild, Lizzie Borden Members of the Performing Garage

Management & Administration For Joan Jonas:
Performing Artservices, Inc.; 325 Spring St.
New York, New York
10013

Figure 4.5. Program for Jonas's *Double Lunar Dogs*, performed at the Performing Garage in 1981. Callard Papers, Series 2I, Box 5, Folder 427. Fales Library Downtown Collection.

Figure 4.6. Performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* at Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 1981. Photo by David Crossley.

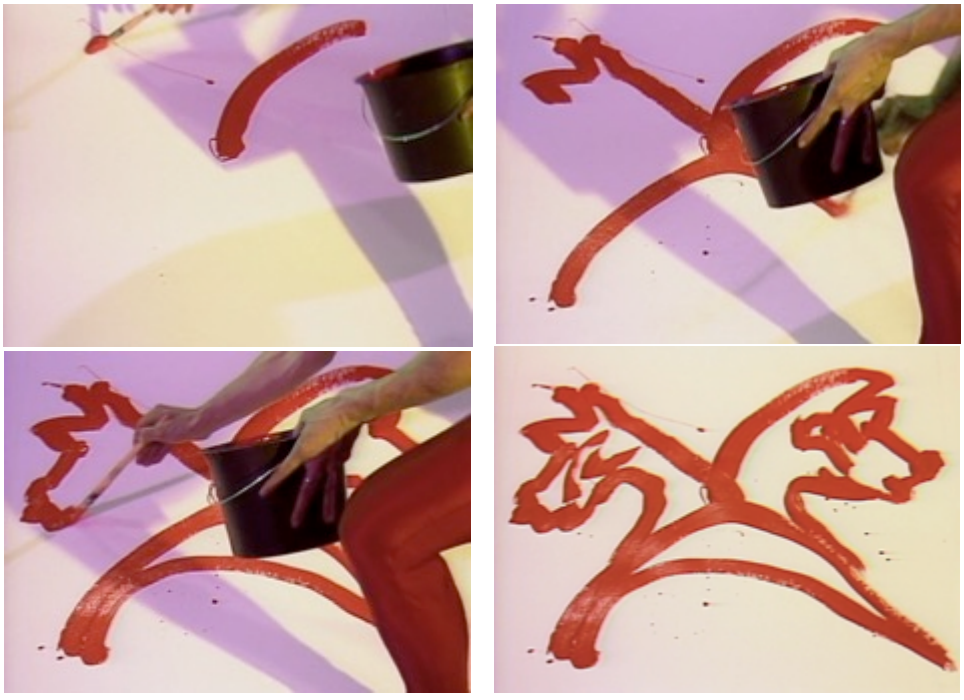


Figure 4.7. Stills from Jonas, *Double Lunar Dogs*, 1984. Video (color, sound). 24 min.

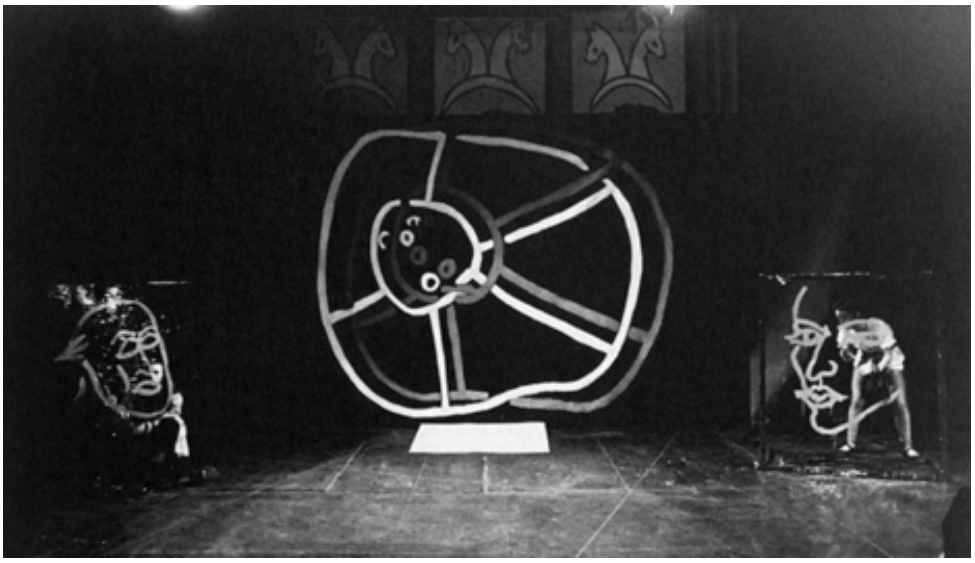


Figure 4.8. Jonas and Jill Kroesen performing in *Double Lunar Dogs* at The Performing Garage, 1981. Photo by Nancy Campbell.

Figure 4.9. Performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* at Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 1981. Photos by David Crossley.

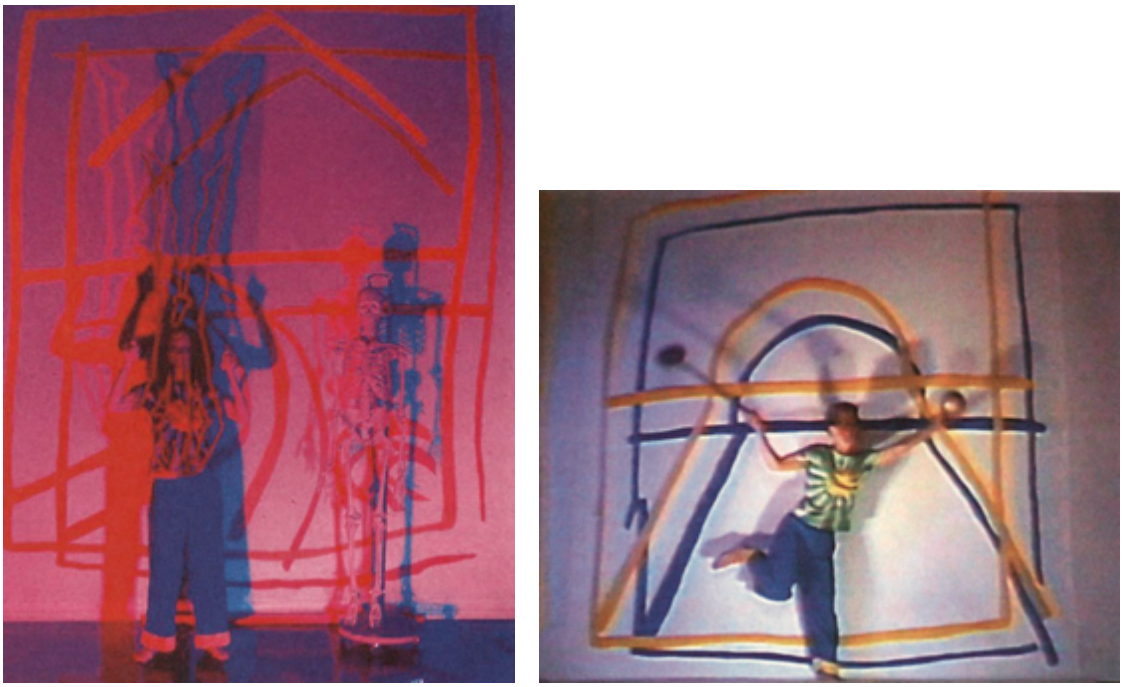


Figure 4.10. Joan Jonas performing *Upside Down and Backwards* (1979) at the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, in 1980. Photos by Benjamin Blackwell.

Figure 4.11. Photograph of Marvin Minsky and a sensory feedback apparatus published in Minsky's "Telepresence," *Omni* (June 1980). Photo by Dan McCoy.

Figure 4.12. Ron Vawter, Spalding Gray, and Joan Jonas in The Wooster Group's *Nayatt School*, 1978. Photo by Bob van Dantzig

Figure 4.13. Performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* at Teatro del Falcone, Palazzo Reale, Genoa, Italy, 1981. Photo by Nanda Lanfranco.

Figure 4.14. Performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* at Teatro del Falcone, Palazzo Reale, Genoa, Italy, 1981. Photo by Nanda Lanfranco.

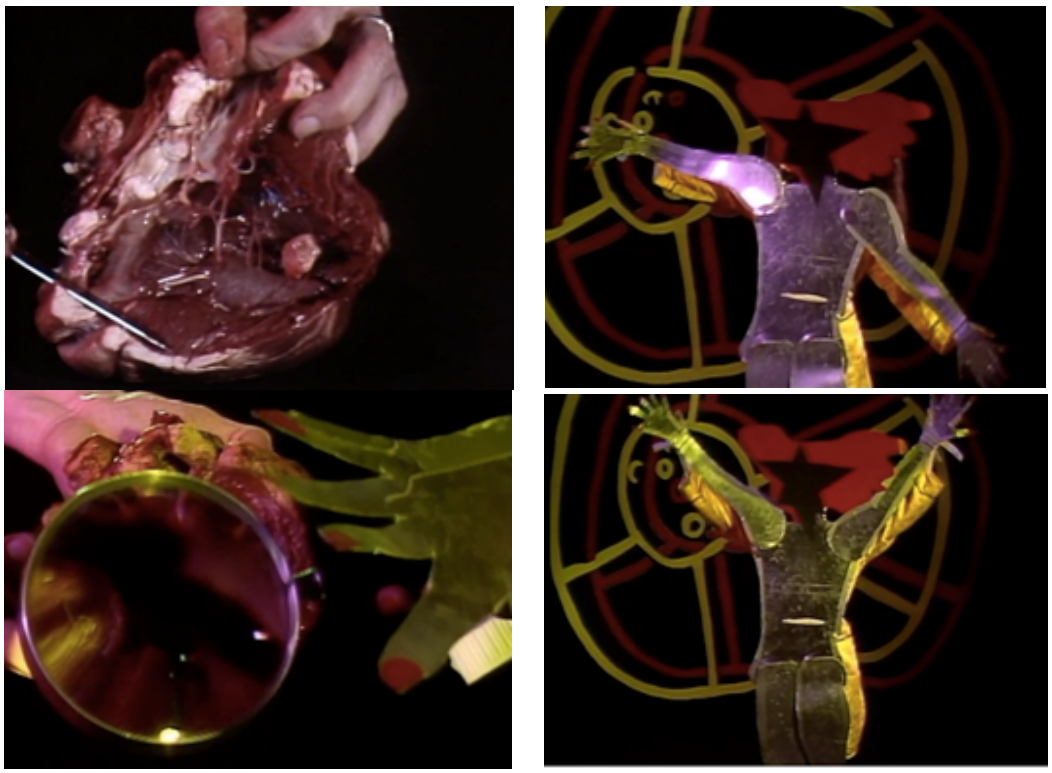


Figure 4.15. Stills from *Double Lunar Dogs.*

Figure 4.16. Performance of *Double Lunar Dogs* at Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 1981. Photo by David Crossely.

Figure 4.17. Stills from *Double Lunar Dogs*.

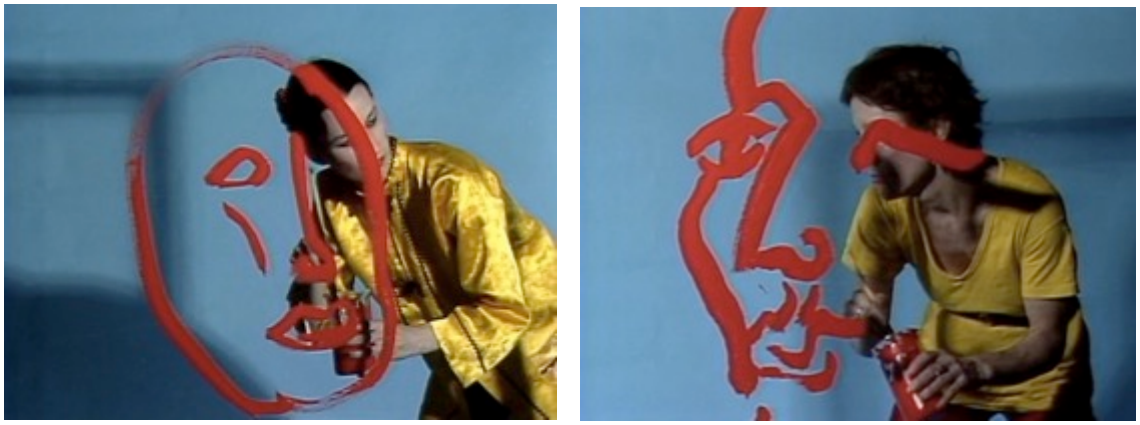


Figure 4.18. Stills from *Double Lunar Dogs*.

Figure 4.19. Stills from *Double Lunar Dogs*.

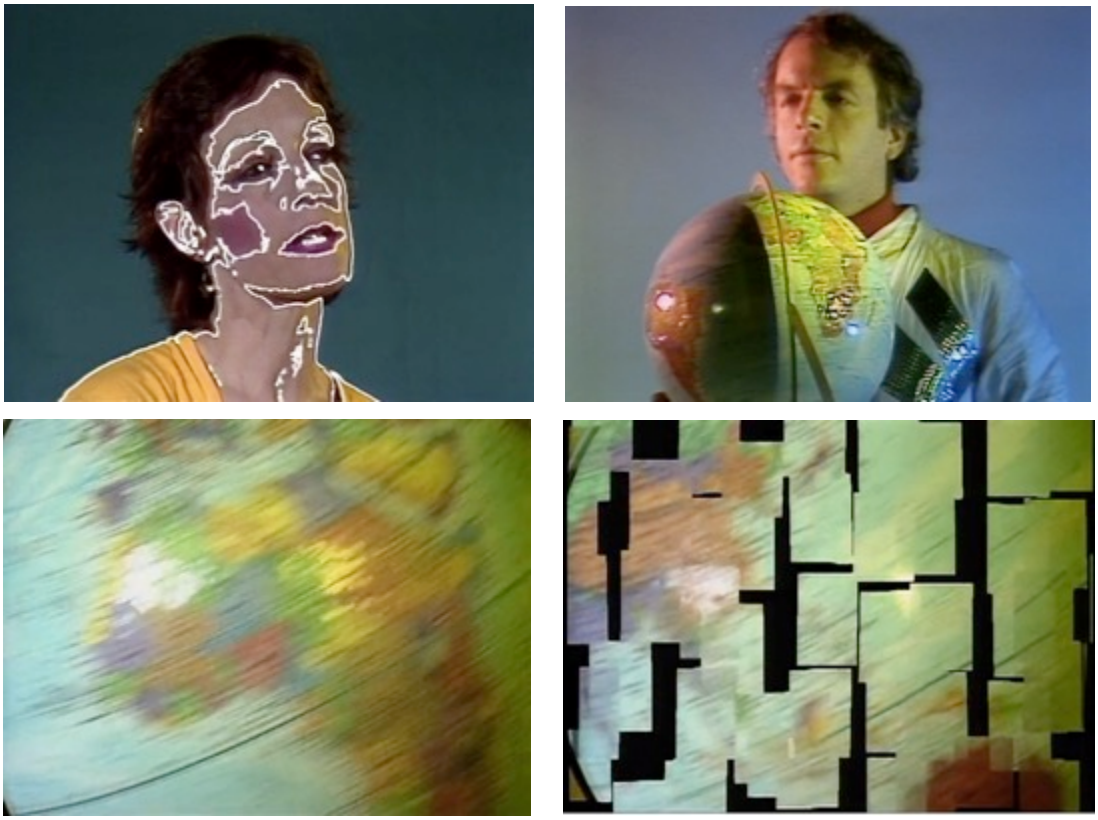


Figure 4.20. Stills from *Double Lunar Dogs*.